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THE
EARLY DAYS OF CHRISTIANITY

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Book IV. (continued).

JUDAIC CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

Γίνεσθε δε ποιηταὶ λόγου.—JA. i. 22.

OF the canonicity of the Epistle of St. James there can hardly be a reasonable doubt, and there is strong ground for believing it to be authentic. It is true that Origen is the first who ascribes it to St. James, and he only speaks of it as an Epistle "currently attributed to him."¹ Clemens of Alexandria, though he wrote on the Catholic Epistles, does not appear to have known it.² Tertullian, from his silence, seems either not to have known it, or not to have accepted it as genuine. It is not mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment. It is a curious fact that even in the pseudo-Clementines it is not directly appended to. It is classed by Eusebius among the Antilegomena,³ but he seems himself to have accepted

¹ Orig. in Joann. xiv. If we could trust the translation of Rufinus (e.g., *Hom. in Gen.* xvi. 18), in other parts of his commentaries he spoke of it as St. James's, and even called it "the Divine Epistle."

² Cassiodorus says that he wrote upon it, but "Jude" ought to be read for James (see Westcott *On the Canon*, p. 353). Eusebius only says that Clemens in his *Outlines* commented even on disputed books: "I mean the Epistle of Jude, and the rest of the Catholic Epistles, and that of Barnabas."

³ *ροθεύεται* (Euseb. ii. 23).

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it. Theodore of Mopsuestia rejected it. On the other hand, there can be little doubt, from the occurrence of parallels to its phraseology, that it was favourably known to Clemens of Rome, Hermas, Irenæus, and Hippolytus. Jerome vindicated its genuineness against the opinion that it was forged in the name of James.¹ It is quoted by Dionysius of Alexandria; and it has the important evidence of the Peshito in its favour. Thus, the Syrian Church received it early, though it was not till the fourth century that it was generally accepted by the Greek and Latin Churches. Nor was it till A.D. 397 that the Council of Carthage placed it in the Canon. On the other hand, the Jewish-Christian tendencies of the Epistle, and what have been called its Ebionising opinions, agree so thoroughly with all that we know of James and the Church of Jerusalem, that they form a very powerful argument from internal evidence in favour of its being a genuine work of the "Bishop" of Jerusalem. Suspicion has been thrown on it because of the good Greek in which it is written, and because of the absence of the essential doctrines of Christianity.² On the first difficulty I shall touch later. The second is rather a proof that the letter *is* authentic, because otherwise, on this ground, and on the ground of its apparent contradiction of St. Paul, it would never have conquered the dogmatic prejudices which were an obstacle to its acceptance. The single fact that it was known to St. Peter, and had exercised a deep influence upon him, is enough to outweigh any deficiency of external evidence.³

In this Epistle, then, St. James has left us a precious

¹ *De Virr. Illustr.* 2. It must, however, be admitted that Jerome's remark is somewhat vacillating.

² See Davidson's *Introd.* i. 303.

³ See *supra*, vol. i. p. 129.

heritage of his thoughts, a precious manual of all that was purest and loftiest in Jewish Christianity. Having passed into the Church through the portals of the Synagogue, and having exulted in joyous obedience to a glorious Law,¹ the Hebraists could not believe with St. Paul that the Institutions of Sinai had fulfilled no loftier function than that of bringing home to the human heart the latent consciousness of sin. They thought that the abrogation of Mosaism would give a perilous licence to sinful passions. St. James also writes as one of those who clung fast to the prerogatives of Israel, and could not persuade themselves that the coming of the Jewish Messiah, so long expected, would have no other national effect than to deprive them of every exclusive privilege, and place them on the same level as the heathens from whom they had so grievously suffered. Further than this, his letter shows some alarm lest a subjective dogmatism should usurp the place of a practical activity, and lest phrases about faith should be accepted as an excuse, if not for Antinomian licence, at least for dreamy indifference to the duties of daily life. St. James keenly dreaded a falling asunder of knowledge and action.² His letter might seem at first sight to be the most direct antithesis to the Epistles of St. Paul to the Galatians and the Romans, and to reach no higher standpoint than that of an idealised Judaism which is deficient in the specific elements of Christianity. It does not even mention the word Gospel. The name of Jesus occurs in it but twice. Nothing is said in it of the work of Redemption. Even the rules of morality are enforced without any appeal to those specific Christian motives which give

¹ Ps. cxix. *passim*.

² Wiesinger, *Einf.* p. 42.

to Christian morality its glow and enthusiasm, and which occur so repeatedly in the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John. "*Be ye doers of the word,*" he says, "*not hearers only.*"¹ "*Who is wise among you? Let him show forth his works with meekness of wisdom.*"² "*Adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?*"³ "*Take the prophets, my brethren, as an example of suffering and of patience.*"⁴ "*Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl.*"⁵ Is it possible to deny that there is a difference between the tone of these appeals and such as "*I have been crucified with Christ.*"⁶ "*But I say walk in the Spirit.*"⁷ "*The love of Christ constraineth us.*"⁸ "*We were buried with Him by baptism unto death . . . so let us also walk in newness of life.*"⁹ "*As he who called you is holy, so become ye holy.*"¹⁰ "*This is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we love one another.*"¹¹ It was the presence of such peculiarities which made Luther take up his hasty, scornful, and superficial view of the Epistle. "On that account," he said, "the Epistle of James, compared with them (the Epistles of St. Paul), is a veritable straw-Epistle (*recht strohern*), for it lacks all Evangelical character."¹² "This Epistle of James, although rejected by the ancients,¹ I praise and esteem good withal, because it setteth not forth any doctrine of man. . . . But to give my opinion, yet without the prejudice of any one, I count it to be no Apostle's writing, and this is my reason: first, because, contrary

¹ i. 22.² iii. 13.³ iv. 4.⁴ v. 5.⁵ v. 1.⁶ Gal. ii. 20.⁷ Gal. v. 16.⁸ 2 Cor. v. 14.⁹ Rom. vi. 4.¹⁰ 1 Pet. i. 15.¹¹ 1 John iii. 11.¹² Preface to New Testament of 1521, p. 105.¹³ This is hardly a fair account of the history of the Epistle and its reception into the Canon.

to St. Paul's writings and all other Scriptures, it puts righteousness in works," on which account he thinks that its author was merely "some good, pious man," though in other places he seems to think that it was written by James the son of Zebedee.¹ It was, perhaps, hardly strange that Luther, who did not possess the clue by which alone the apparent contradictions to St. Paul could be explained, should have arrived at this opinion. To him the letter seemed to be in direct antagonism to the truth which had wrought his own conversion, and which became powerful in his hands for the overthrow of sacerdotal usurpation and the revival of religious faith. But this unfavourable opinion of the Epistle lingered on. It is found in the Magdeburg centuriators and in Ströbel, who said that, "no matter in what sense we take the Epistle, it is always in conflict with the remaining parts of Holy Writ." On similar grounds Erasmus, Cajetan, Grotius, and Wetstein hesitated to accept it.² Such views are untenable, because they are

¹ In 1519, he calls it "wholly inferior to the Apostolic majesty" (in the seventh Thesis against Eck); in 1520, "unworthy of an Apostolic spirit" (*De Captiv. Babylon.*). In the *Postills* he says it was written by no Apostle, and is "nowhere fully conformable to the true Apostolic character and manner, and to pure doctrine." In his preface to the Epistle, in 1522 (*Werke*, xiv. 148), he speaks almost contemptuously. "He" (St. James), he says, "has aimed to refute those who relied on faith without works, and is too weak for his task in mind, understanding, and words, mutilates the Scriptures, and thus directly stracks) contradicts Paul and all Scripture, seeking to accomplish by enforcing the law what the Apostles successfully effect by love. Therefore, I will not place his Epistle in my Bible among the proper leading books." Nor did he ever, as is sometimes asserted, retract these opinions. His *Table Talk* shows that he held them to the last, and considered St. James irreconcilable with St. Paul (*Colloq.* lxi. 4). See the quotation, *infra*, p. 90. Archdeacon Hare (*Mission of the Comforter*, ii. 815) rightly says that "Luther's words cannot always be weighed in jewellers' scales."

² The objections of Schleiermacher, De Wette, Reuss, Baur, Schwegler, Ritschl, Davidson, etc., are based on critical and other grounds.

onesided. We shall consider afterwards the alleged polemic against *St. Paul*; and in judging of the *Epistle* generally we must bear in mind its avowedly practical character, and the entire training of the writer and of those to whom it was addressed. The purpose for which it was written was to encourage the Jewish Christians to the endurance of trial by stirring them up to a brighter energy of holy living. And in doing this he neither urges a slavish obedience nor a terrified anxiety. If he does not dwell, as assuredly he does not, on the specific Christian motives, he does not at any rate put in their place a ceremonial righteousness. His ideals are the ideals of truth and wisdom, not of accurate legality. The Law which he has in view is not the threatful Law of Moses, which gendereth to bondage, but the royal Law, the perfect Law of liberty, the Law as it was set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. He is the representative, not of Judaism, but of Christian Judaism—that is, of Judaism in its transformation and transfiguration. A book may be in the highest sense Christian and religious without using the formulas of religion and Christianity. The Book of Esther is a Sacred book, a book of the inspired Canon, and a book justly valued, though it does not so much as mention the name of God. The bottom of the ocean is always presupposed as existent though it be neither visible nor alluded to. And, as we shall see later on, there are passages in the *Epistle of St. James* which involve the deepest truths of that Christian faith of which he avows himself a humble follower, although it was not his immediate object to develop the dogmatic side of Christianity at all. If some of the weightiest Christian doctrines are not touched

DATE OF THE EPISTLE.

upon, there are, on the other hand, more references to the discourses of Christ in this Epistle than in all the others put together.¹

If we could be certain of the date of the Epistle, and of the characters whom St. James had chiefly in view, some light would doubtless be thrown on these peculiarities. But on these subjects we are unfortunately in doubt. Amid the differing opinions respecting the date, I side with those who look upon the Epistle as one of the later, not as perhaps the earliest, in the Canon. One or two facts seem to point in this direction. On the one hand, the Epistle could not have been written after the year A.D. 63, because in that year St. James was martyred. On the other hand, the condition and wide dissemination of the Churches to which it is addressed; the prevalence of the *name* Christ instead of the *title* "the Christ";² the growth of respect for persons as shown in distinction of seats; the sense of delay in the Second Coming,³ and other circumstances, make it necessary to assume that many years had elapsed since the Day of Pentecost. Further, it seems probable that some of St. James's allusions may find their explanation in a state of political excitement, caused by hopes and fears which, perhaps, within a year or two of the time when it was written, broke out in the wild scenes of the Jewish revolt. Lastly, it seems impossible to deny that although St. James *may* have written his arguments about faith and works⁴ without having read what had been written on the same subject by St. Paul,⁵ and in

¹ See Döllinger, *First Age of the Church*, p. 107 (tr. Oxenhan.
ii. 7. ii. 21- 26.

⁵ It is not necessary to assume in consequence that "Apostolical

the Epistle to the Hebrews, still his language finds its most reasonable explanation in the supposition that he is striving to remove the dangerous inferences to which St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was liable when it was wrested by the unlearned and the ignorant.¹ If so, the Epistle cannot have been written more than a year or two before St. James's death, since the date of the Epistle to the Galatians is A.D. 57, and that of the Epistle to the Romans A.D. 58. It has been urged against this conclusion that if it had been written later than the so-called "Council of Jerusalem" in A.D. 50, it must have contained references to the great dispute about the obligations of circumcision. But the circumcision question, fiercely as it was debated at the time, was speedily forgotten; and it must be borne in mind that St. James is writing exclusively to Jews. Again, it has been urged that the trials to which he alludes must have been the persecutions at Jerusalem, in which Saul and Herod Agrippa I. were respectively the chief movers. But persecution in one form or other was the chronic trial of Jewish as well as of other

Epistles were transcribed by the hundred and circulated broadcast"; or that "copies of what was written for Rome or Galatia would be at once despatched by a special courier to the Bishop of Jerusalem" (Plumptre, p. 42). The Church of Jerusalem was kept well acquainted with the movements and tenets of St. Paul, and any of the Passover pilgrims from Asia Minor might have informed James of the drift of the Apostle's arguments, and of some of his more striking expressions, even if he could not procure a copy of a complete Epistle.

¹ Baur says (*Ch. Hist.* p. 128), "It is impossible to deny that the Epistle of James presupposes the Pauline doctrine of justification." He admits that "it may not be aimed directly against the Apostle himself," but says that, if so, "its tendency is distinctly anti-Pauline." Nevertheless, both St. Paul and St. James might, in the sense in which they were alone intended, have interchanged each other's apparently antagonistic formulae. See *infra*, pp. 190-93.

Christians. To refer to the existence of deep poverty as a sign that the Epistle was written about the time of the general famine of A.D. 44 is to rely on a very shadowy argument, since famines at this period were by no means unfrequent, and poverty was the permanent condition of the saints at Jerusalem. I therefore disagree with the views of Neander, Alford, and Dr. Plumptre, who argue for the early date; and I agree with those of De Wette, Bishop Wordsworth, and many others, who fix the date of the Epistle about the year A.D. 61.¹

If, however, the date of the Epistle be uncertain, we have no uncertainty about the place where it was written. That is undeniably Jerusalem. When once settled in that city, St. James, with the natural stationariness of the Oriental, seems never to have left it. Its Temple and ritual would have had for him a strong attraction. The notion of writing the Epistle may have partly originated from the circumstance that the Jewish high priest sent missives from the Holy City, which were received with profound respect throughout the length and breadth of the Dispersion. Similarly, the first bishop of the metropolis of Christianity was one to whom every Jewish Church might naturally look for advice and consolation. The physical allusions in the Epistle to oil, and wine, and figs, to salt and bitter springs, to the Kaûsôn, or burning wind of Palestine, and, above all, to the former and the latter rain, show that the letter was despatched

¹ Euseb. *Ch. s. H. E.* ii. 23; iii. 11) gives A.D. 69 as the date of St. James's death, apparently because Hegesippus said that the siege happened "immediately afterwards." But if the narrative of Josephus is correct, St. James could not have been killed *later* than A.D. 63. This is the date given by Eusebius in his *Chronicon*.

from Jerusalem. Some have supposed that it was written at Joppa; but this is only a precarious inference from the allusion to the life of the shore and the traffic in the harbour, the fish and the wonders of the sea.¹ There can, at any rate, be no doubt that it emanated from Palestine.

In this Palestinian origin I see an explanation of some of the phenomena of the Epistle. We see, for instance, why it is that St. James seems to be speaking sometimes to Jews and sometimes to Christians, sometimes to all the Churches of the Dispersion and sometimes almost exclusively to the Churches of Judæa. The difficulty vanishes when we remember the position of the writer. He is addressing "the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion." It was a sufficiently wide range—wider than that of any one of the Epistles. It included Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, dwellers in Cappadocia, Galatia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya about Cyrene, strangers at Rome, Cretes and Arabians, Jews and proselytes.² But of the varying conditions of these widely-scattered communities he could know almost nothing. He could have no information about them except such as he might now and then derive from the general talk of some Passover pilgrim. He addresses them, indeed, as a "Christian high priest wearing the golden mitre" might have done, or as a sort of ideal *Resh Galútha*, or "Prince of the Captivity," might have addressed his fellow-countrymen in later days.³ But he could only

¹ James i. 6; iii. 4; iv. 13 (Hansrath, *N. Test. Zeitg.* 1, § 5).

² Acts ii. 9—12. The reader will find a sketch of the character of the Jewish Dispersion, and of the events which led to it, in my *Life of St. Paul*, i. pp. 115—125.

³ The Jews of the Dispersion in Babylonia were called "the Gola," or

speak on topics which he might infer to be necessary because he saw that they were necessary for the Syrian Churches, with whose trials and temptations he had an exclusive familiarity. His remarks, for instance, about the conduct of the rich, and the bearing of the poor towards them, have created the greatest perplexity. These rich men, whose arrogance is described as so outrageous, were they Jews, Christians, or Gentiles? I think that I find an explanation of his allusions in conduct which he saw daily taking place under his own eyes. The Jewish Church at Jerusalem was at that time governed by a clique of aristocratic Sadducees. They were men of immense wealth, which they increased by violent and dishonest exactions. Profoundly hated by the people, they were yet kept secure in their positions by the close understanding which they usually preserved with the Herods and the Romans. Outwardly, therefore, they were treated with abject reverence, and in spite of the curses, not loud but deep, which were secretly uttered against them, and which were soon to burst in vengeance upon their heads, they were able to exercise an almost uncontrolled authority. When we read side by side the denunciations hurled by St. James against the tyrannous greed and cruel insolence of the rich, and the eight-fold and thrice-repeated curse of the Talmud¹ against the blood-stained and worldly hierarchs who disgraced the mitre of Aaron, it will be seen, I think, that these passages of the Epistle sprang, at least in part, from the indignation with which the Christian

"Deportation," and they enjoyed a sort of independence under a ruler of their own choice known as the *Resh Galûtha*. See on his office, Etheridge, *Hebr. Lit.* 151, *seq.*

¹ Posachim, 57, a; Tosetta Menachoth; Derenbourg, *Palest.* 233; Geiger, *Urschrift*, 118.

bishop had witnessed the conduct of the detested Boethusîm and Benî-Hanan. To their vengeance he at last succumbed, and under their avarice and worldliness the Jews of that day vainly struggled. St. James says :—

“Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?”¹

And again—

“Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. . . . Behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth. . . . Ye have lived in pleasure in the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter; ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you.”²

It is obvious that these remarks could not apply to the treatment of the poor by the rich throughout all the Ghettos and Christian communities of the world. In the infant Churches, during the whole of the first century, there were “not many rich.”³ The few wealthy and noble Gentiles who were converted were so far from being able to wield such a tyranny as St. James describes, that, in the gatherings of the converts, they might be under the spiritual supervision of presbyters and “bishops” who occupied no higher earthly rank than that of slaves. Moreover, no Christian could have dared to “blaspheme”—that is, to speak injuriously of the name of “Christian” or of “Christ.” But St. James is not thinking exclusively of Christian communities. He is writing of things which were on the horizon of his daily life. Read what the Tal-

mudists say of the priestly families by which he was surrounded, and his allusions at once become explicable. For thus in the tract Yoma (f. 9, *a*) we find:—

“What is meant by Ps. x. 27, ‘The fear of the Lord longeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened’? The first clause alludes to the 410 years of the first Temple, during which period there were but eighteen high priests. But ‘*the years of the wicked shall be shortened*’ is illustrated by the fact that during the 426 years of the second Temple there were more than 300 high priests in succession. So that, deducting the forty years of Simon the Righteous, and the eighty of Rabbi Jochanan, and the ten of Ishmael Ben Phabi, it is evident that not one of the remaining high priests lived to hold office for a whole year”¹ The supposed fact is unhistorical, but the remark shows in what low estimation these later hierarchs were held.

Again, in the tract Pesachim (57, *a*) we find one of several repetitions of the famous malediction on these priestly families:—

“Woe unto the family of Boethus
Woe to their bludgeons!
Woe to the house of Hanan,
Woe to their viper hissings!
Woe to the family of Canthera,
Woe to their libels!
Woe to the family of Ishmael Ben-Phabi
Woe to their blows with the fist!



“They are themselves chief priests, their sons are treasurers, their sons-in-law captains of the Temple, and their servants strike the people with their staves.”

¹ Hershon, *Talm. Miscell.* p. 107. All insolent priests were supposed to be descended from Pashur, the son of Immer. Kiddushin, f. 70 b. (id. p. 244).

Again, we are told that the Vestibule of the Temple uttered four cries—"Depart hence, sons of Eli, who defile the Temple of the Eternal! Depart, Issachar of Kephâr Barkaï, who only carest for self, and profanest the victims consecrated to Heaven!" And again: "Open, ye gates, let Ishmael Ben Phabi enter, the disciple of Phinehas (son of Eli), to do the duties of high priest; open, let John, son of Nebedæus, enter, the disciple of gluttons, to gorge himself with victims."¹

Tales of these priests—their luxury, their gluttony, their simony, their avarice, their atheism—long lingered in the hearts of the people. They told how this Issachar, in his fastidious insolence, had had silk gloves made to prevent the soiling of his hands while he sacrificed; of the calves which John, son of Nebedæus, had devoured, and the tuns of wine which he had drunk; how Martha, daughter of Boethus, had bought the priesthood for her husband Joshua, son of Gamala, for two bushels of gold denarii, and had carpets spread from her house to the Temple when she went to see him sacrifice; how the house of Hanan deliberately raised the price of doves, in order to make gain out of the poor, till they were liberated from this tyranny by Gamaliel, the grandson of Hillel; how Eliezer Ben Charsom went to the Temple in a robe which had cost 20,000 minæ, and which was so transparent that the other priests forbade him to wear it.² Even Josephus bears witness to the ruthless extortion and cruelty with which they defrauded the inferior priests of their dues

¹ Pesachim, l. c., and Kerithoth, 28, a.

² Yoma, 35, b. See Raphall, *Hist. of Jews*, ii. 370; Grätz, *Gesch. de Juden*, iii. 321; Derenbourg, *Palest.* p. 233, *seq.*, and my *Life of Christ*, ii. 330-332, where the original references are given.

until they were almost reduced to the verge of starvation.¹ In the section which follows his account of the murder of James, he says that the greedy procurator Albinus cultivated the friendship of Joshua, the high priest, and the other chief priests, and joined with them in robbing the threshing-floors by violence, and that for this reason some of the priests died from inability to recover the tithes which were their sole means of sustenance.

But, while he thus alluded to the state of things in Jerusalem, there can be no doubt that St. James mainly intended to address Christians. Otherwise he would have added some explanation of his simple title, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."² Nor could he otherwise have said, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons;"³ nor again, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord."⁴ How is it, then, that the Epistle contains none of the rich and advanced Christology of many other Epistles? that the allusions to *specific* Christian doctrine and motive are so rare? How is it that the word "gospel" does not once occur in it? that Christianity is still viewed under the aspect of Law, though truly of an idealised and royal Law? that the general tone of appeal is much more like that of John the Baptist than that of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John? How is it that next to the moral parts

¹ *Jos. Antt.* xx. 8, § 8; 9, § 2.

² i. 1.

³ ii. 1.

⁴ v. 7. See other distinctively Christian allusions in i. 18: "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth;" ii. 7: "Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?" v. 6: "Ye condemned and killed the Just;" v. 14: "Anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

of the Sermon on the Mount, St. James is most frequent in his references to books of apocryphal wisdom, written by unconverted Jews? How is it that there are whole sections which might have been almost written by an Epictetus or a Marcus Aurelius? I think that the reason, and the only reason, which can be given, is that while he is *writing* in the first instance to Christians, he is *thinking* to a great extent of Jews. The Christians were few, the Jews many. He has begun by saying that he is writing to the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion, and he meant his letter to be delivered primarily to the Christians among them. But the Christians whom he has in view were *also* Jews. He does not even allude to the Gentiles. The converts whom he addresses had never thought of deserting the ceremonies, or abandoning what they imagined to be the exclusive privileges of the chosen seed.¹ And he was himself a Jew, living among Jews, and living in all respects as a Jew of the strictest orthodoxy, revered even by many who regarded his belief in Christ as a mere aberration—a mere excrescence on his Judaic devotion. It was from Jews, not from Christians,—it was because of accuracy in Jewish observances, not for strictness of Christian morality,—that he had received the surname of “the Just.” Let it be borne in mind that, alike amid Jews and Gentiles, the distinction between the Jew and the Christian was infinitely less wide in the first generation after Christ’s death than it afterwards became. St. Paul, even after he had written the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, did not hesitate

¹ We have observed the same phenomena of a sort of dual consciousness as to the readers whom he is addressing in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. See *Life and Work of St. Paul*, ii 168, 169.

to exclaim before the assembled Sanhedrin, "Brethren, 'I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees,'" and to reduce the whole question between him and them to a question of believing in the Resurrection. As a Nazarite, as an heir of David, as having priestly blood in his veins, as one whose faithfulness was known to all the dwellers in Jerusalem, and to all who visited it, as a Jew who walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Law blameless, James might well consider it his duty to address words of warning and exhortation, primarily indeed to the Christian Churches of Judæa, but through them to all his countrymen. To him the Church is still not only the Ecclesia (v. 14), but the Synagogue (ii. 2)—a word which even the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems purposely to avoid, but which was used *exclusively* by the Ebionites.¹ When alluding to the object of faith, he speaks not of Christ, but of "One God" (ii. 19). He warns against swearing by the heaven and by the earth (v. 12), which we know from the Gospels (Matt. v. 33) to have been common formulæ of Jewish adjuration. He saw in Jews the catechumens of Christianity, and in Christians the ideal Jews. The fact is, that alike in the real and in the traditional St. James we see the traces of views which distinguished three parties of Jewish Christians in the first century, and which continued to exist in three classes of Jewish Christians in the second. Like St. Paul and like the Nazarenes, he did not insist on the observance of Mosaism by the Gentiles; yet, like the milder Ebionites, he appears to have leaned—or, at any rate, his followers leaned—to the belief that even for Gentiles

¹ Epiphani. *Hæc.* xxx. 18.

they might be of great importance; and, like the *Essene* or ascetic Judaists, he personally adopted the rigid practices which may have been to him a valuable training in self-discipline, but which the Colossian and other heretics regarded as constituting a legal righteousness. To us the name "Jewish Christian" may seem almost an oxymoron—a juxtaposition of contrary terms. We see with St. Paul—whose opinions had been the result of special divine training—that between the bondage of ceremonialism and the freedom of Christianity—between the righteousness of legal ordinances and justification by faith—there is a profound antithesis. But it was impossible that it could wear this aspect to the early Christians. *We* view the matter after nineteen centuries of Christian experience; they were the immediate heirs of nineteen centuries of Jewish history.

But while in the first line of his letter St. James testifies to his own faith, he must have known that his words would be received with respect by genuine Hebrews, and that it would be useless to enforce the lessons which he wished to impress upon *all* his countrymen by appeals distinctively Christian. His whole nation was in a state of wild tumult; swayed by passion and worldliness; indulging in the fierce language of hatred, fanaticism, and conceit; becoming godless in their tone of thought; relying on the orthodoxy of Monotheism; careless and selfish in the duties of life; forgetful of the omnipotence of prayer. And the Christians whom he is addressing, being Jews, participated in these dangers. He wished to make the Christians better Christians, to teach them a truer wisdom, a purer morality. He wished

to make them better Christians by making them better Israelites; and he wished to convert the Israelites into being worthier members of the commonwealth of Israel before he could win them to become heirs of the covenant of the better promise. If we bear these circumstances in mind, if we also remember that his letter is not intended for a dogmatic treatise, but for the moral exhortation of one to whom the Law means the rule of life as Jesus had taught it, we shall be better able to judge of the rashness which has only condemned or slighted this Epistle because it has failed to understand the true purpose of the writer.

Again, to grasp the full meaning of St. James, we must appreciate the passionate earnestness of one whose ideal is too stern to admit of *any* compromise with the aims and pleasures of the world.

i. Critics have spoken of the *Essenism and the Ebionism* of the Epistle. But although "help and mercy" were special duties of the Essene, and though St. James "writes mercy upon his flag," there is no trace that he was an Essene. Doubtless he sympathised with many of the views of that singular body. Any Essene might have spoken just as St. James does about oaths, and riches and merchandise, and the virtue of silence, and the duty of checking wrath;¹ but so might any Christian who had studied, as St. James had studied, the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. The later Ebionites represented Judaism when it had passed into heresy. The views and tendencies of the early Christians in Jerusalem, before they had been modified by

¹ Comp. Ja. i. 19; ii. 5, 13; iv. 13; v. 12; with Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* II. 8, 6, and Philo, *Quod omnis prob. lib.*, § 12 (Hilgenfeld, *Einleit.* p. 539).

the teachings of experience, were only Ebionite in a sense perfectly innocent. In these views and tendencies St. James shared, but he did not fall into the extravagant exaggeration by which they were subsequently caricatured.

ii. Some, again, have seen in the expressions of St. James an *Orphic colouring*; but of this we require much stronger proof than the phrases "the engrafted word," or "the wheel of being" (iii. 6), even though those phrases may be illustrated by parallels in the writings of Pythagoreans.¹ Undoubtedly, however, we find a peculiarity of the Epistle in the extreme frequency of the parallels between its language and that of other writers. These are so numerous that I have no space to write them out at length, but no careful reader can entirely miss them.² They show how strong was the originality which could absorb influences from many different sources, and yet maintain its own perfect independence. In this respect the Epistle of St. James

¹ The hexameter in i. 17 (where the word *δῶμα* is unknown to the N. T. in this sense), and the expression "Father of lights" have been suspected of being borrowed from Alexandrian sources. For the latter see Dan. viii. 10.

² Every chapter will furnish parallels to passages in the *Sermon on the Mount* (see Matt. v. 3, 4, 10-12, 22, 24, 33-37, 48; vi. 14, 15, 19, 24; vii. 1-5, 7-12, 21-23) and the eschatological discourse (Mk. xiii. 7, 9, 29, 32). For the very remarkable and close parallels to the *Book of Ecclesiasticus*, comp. i. 5, 8, 12, 13, 19, 23, 25; iii. 5, 6, respectively with Ecclus. xx. 15; xli. 22; i. 28; xv. 11; v. 11; xx. 7; xii. 11; xiv. 23; xxviii. 10, 19 (especially in the Greek). For parallels to the *Book of Wisdom*, comp. Ja. i. 10, 11, 17, 20; ii. 21; iv. 14; v. 1-6, with Wisdom ii. 8; v. 8; vii. 17-20; xii. 16; x. 5; v. 9-14; ii. 1-24. For parallels to the *Book of Proverbs* comp. i. 5, 6, 12, 19, 21; iii. 5; iv. 6; v. 20, respectively with Prov. iii. 5, 6; xxiii. 34; iii. 11; Eccl. v. 2; Prov. xxx. 12; xvi. 27; iii. 34; x. 12. Many more might be added, but the student who will verify these references for himself will see how fully the points mentioned in the text are proved.

differs remarkably from the Epistle of St. Clemens of Rome. St. James, even while he borrows alike from Jewish prophets and from Alexandrian theosophists, fuses their language into a manifesto of Judaic Christianity by the heat and vehemence of his own individuality. He strikes lightning into all he borrows. St. Clemens is far more passively receptive. He has the amiable and conciliatory catholicity which leads him to adopt the moral teaching of all schools; but he has none of the individual force which might have enabled him to infuse into what he has borrowed an individual force.

iii. The *style* of St. James, as compared with his tone of thought, presents the singular combination of pure, eloquent, and even rhythmical Greek, with the prophetic vehemence and fiery sternness of the Hebrew prophet. The purity of the Greek idiom has been made a ground for doubting the genuineness of the Epistle.¹ But the objection is without weight. Palestine—even Galilee—was in those days bilingual. James had probably spoken Greek from his birth. He would therefore find no difficulty in writing in that language, and his natural aptitude may have given him a better style than that of many of his countrymen.² But even if not, what difficulty is there in the supposition that St. James, like St. Peter, employed an “interpreter,”³ or

¹ *E.g.*, De Wette asks, How could James write such good Greek?

² Incomparably better, for instance, than that of St. John in the Apocalypse.

³ St. Mark and a certain Glaucias are both mentioned as “interpreters” of St. Peter. Of the latter—claimed as an authority by the Basilidians—nothing is known; but St. Mark may have acted as “interpreter” to St. Peter rather when he needed Latin at Rome than when he wrote in Greek.

adopted the common plan of submitting his manuscript to the revision of some accomplished Hellenist? The thoughts, the order of them, and the tone in which they are expressed, are exactly such as we should have expected, from all that we know of the writer. The *form* of expression may easily have been corrected by any literary member of the Church of Jerusalem. But the accent of authority, the noble sternness, the demand for unwavering allegiance to the laws of God—even the poetic parallelisms¹—are all his own. When Schleiermacher speaks of “much bombast” in the Epistle, and describes the style as being “in part ornate, in part clumsy,” it is because he criticises it from a wrong standpoint. It is like Voltaire criticising Æschylus or Shakspeare. It is due to the application of Hellenic canons to Semitic genius. The style of St. James is formed on the Hebrew prophets, as his thoughts are influenced by the Hebrew gnomologists. He has nothing of the Pauline method of dialectic; he is never swept away, like St. Paul, by the tide of his own impassioned feeling. His moral earnestness glows with the steady light of a furnace, never rushes with the uncontrolled force of a conflagration. The groups of thoughts follow each other in distinct sections, which never interlace each other, and have little or no logical connexion or systematic advance. He plunges *in medias res* with each new topic; says first in the plainest and most straightforward manner exactly what he means to say, and enforces it afterwards with strong diction, passionate ejaculations, rapid interrogatives, and graphic similitudes. He generally begins mildly, and with a use of the word “brethren,” but as he dwells

¹ Bishop Jebb, *Sacred Literat.* p. 273.

on the point his words seem to grow incandescent with the writer's vehemence.¹ In many respects his style resembles that of a fiery prophetic oration rather than of a letter. The sententious form is the expression of a practical energy which will tolerate no opposition. The changes—often apparently abrupt—from one topic to another; the short sentences, which seem to quiver in the mind of the hearer from the swiftness with which they have been launched forth; the sweeping reproofs, sometimes unconnected by conjunctions,² sometimes emphasised by many conjunctions;³ the manner in which the phrases seem to catch fire as the writer proceeds; the vivid freshness and picturesque energy of the expressions;⁴—all make us fancy that we are listening to some great harangue which has for its theme the rebuke of sin and the exhortation to righteousness, in order to avert the awfulness of some imminent crisis. The power of his style consists in the impression which it leaves of the burning sincerity and lofty character of the author.

iv. For these reasons it is almost impossible to write an *analysis* of the Epistle. The analysis is only a catalogue of the subjects with which it deals.⁵ Writing

¹ A; specimens of his method in these respects see ii. 1—13; iv. 11, 12.

² Asyndeton, or absence of conjunctions, Ja. v. 3—6.

³ Polysyndeton, or multiplicity of conjunctions, Ja. iv. 13.

⁴ What the ancient critics call *δεινότης*. St. James is a perfect autocrat in the use of words. He abounds in *hapax legomena*, or expressions either not found elsewhere or not in the New Testament. These are mentioned in the notes.

⁵ Ewald arranges it in *seven* divisions, followed by *three* shorter paragraphs:—

i. 2—18. On trials.

i. 19—27. How we ought to hear and do God's Word.

ii. 1—13. Right behaviour in general.

ii. 14—26. The relation between Faith and Works.

to those who are suffering trials, he exhorts them to endurance, that they may lack nothing (i. 1—4). But if they lack wisdom, they must ask God for it, and desire it with whole-heartedness (5—8). 'The enemy of whole-heartedness is often worldly wealth, and he therefore tells them how blessed poverty may be, and how transitory are riches (9—11). Since poverty is in itself a trial, he shows the blessedness of enduring the trials which come from God. But there are trials which, while they come in the semblance of trials from God, have their origin in lust and their end death (12—15). It is only the good and perfect gifts which come from God; above all, the gift of our birth by the Word of Truth (16—18). Let them in meekness and purity live worthily of that Word of Truth (19—21); let them be doers, and not mere hearers of it (22—25); let them learn to distinguish between external service and the true ritual of loving unselfishness (26, 27).

Then passing to some of their special national faults, he first sternly rebukes the respect of persons, which was contrary to Christ's ideal, and a sin against the perfect law of liberty (ii. 1—13). It is, perhaps,

iii. 1—18. Control of the tongue is true wisdom.

iv. 1—12. The evils of strife.

iv. 13—v. 11. Perils of the rich, and duty of endurance with reference to the coming of Christ.

(i.) v. 12. The sinfulness of needless oaths.

(ii.) v. 13—18. The power of prayer, especially in sickness.

(iii.) v. 19, 20. The blessing of converting others.

The reader will perhaps think some of the divisions somewhat artificial, especially as Ewald himself describes them. But there is nothing surprising in the general fact that a Jewish-Christian should arrange his work with some reference to numerical symmetry; and Ewald points out that the number *three* prevails in ii. 19, iii. 15, and the number *seven* in iii. 17.

because he saw the origin of this selfish arrogance and abject servility in the reliance which they placed on a nominal orthodoxy, that he enters into the question about faith and works, to show that the former, in his sense of the word, is dead, and therefore valueless without the latter (14—26).

Then he powerfully warns them against the sins of the tongue in passion and controversy (iii. 1—12); and to show that the loudest and angriest talker is not therefore in the right, he draws a contrast between true and false wisdom (13—18).

The source of the evils on which he has been dwelling is the unbridled lust which springs from worldliness. They need humility, and the determination to fight against sin, and sincere repentance (iv. 1—10), which will show itself in an avoidance of evil speaking (11, 12), and in a deeper sense that their life is wholly in God's disposing hands (13—17).

After this he bursts into a strong denunciation of the rich who live in pride, oppression, and self-indulgence (v. 1—6), while he comforts the poor, and counsels them to patience (7—11). Then he warns against careless oaths (12), gives counsels for the time of sickness (13—15), advises mutual confession of sins (16), dwells once more on the efficacy of prayer, as shown in the example of Elijah (16—20), and ends somewhat abruptly with a weighty declaration of the blessedness of converting others.

v. If it be asked what is the one predominant thought in the Epistle, its one idea and motive, the answer seems to be neither (as some have supposed) the blessedness of enduring temptation—though this is

very prominent in it;¹ nor a polemic against mistaken impressions respecting justification by faith, though that occupies an important section;² nor an Ebionising exaltation of the poor over the rich, though the rich are sternly warned;³ nor a contrast between the friendship of the world and the enmity of God.⁴ Each of these topics has its own weight and importance, but to bring any of them into *exclusive* prominence is to confuse the general with the special. The general object, as is shown again and again, is to impress the conviction that Christian faithfulness must express itself in the energy and action of loving service.⁵ "Temptations," indeed, occupy a large share in his thoughts, but he wished his readers to try against them the "expulsive power of good affections." The ritualism of active love and earnestness in prayer are with him the means of perfection.⁶

vi. It is this object which gives to the Epistle its controversial aspect. St. Paul says that a man is justified by faith; St. James, that he is justified by works; but St. James is using the word "faith" from the standpoint of Jewish realism, not of Pauline ideality. With both of these Apostles the Law is an inward, not an outward thing; a principle of liberty, not a

¹ Ja. i. 3 and 4, ὑπομονή; 12, μακάριος ἄνθρωπος, ὅς ἐστιν ὑπομένει; v. 7, μακροθυμήσατε ὅτι, ἀδελφοί . . . μακροθυμῶν; 8, μακροθυμήσατε καὶ ὑμεῖς; 10, ὑπόδειγμα λάβετε . . . τῆς μακροθυμίας; 11, ὑπομένοντας.

² ii. 10—26.

³ ii. 1—7; iv. 1—10; v. 1—6.

⁴ iv. 4, 5 (1 J. ii. 15—17), and he opposes special forms of worldliness in i. 2—15; ii. 1—4; iii. 1—18; iv. 13, 14.

⁵ i. 4, 22, ii. 14—16, iii. 13—17; iv. 17, &c.

⁶ St. James dwells on this word, i. 3, 25; iii. 2; v. 4; "Tout dans l'écriture est l'idéal" (Ad. Monod). He speaks of prayer in i. 5; iv. 2, 3, 8; v. 13—18.

yoke of bondage; a word of truth; a living impulse of fruitful activity implanted in man.¹ Seeing the danger of doctrinal formalism, St. James writes to counteract its unpractical tendencies, and to furnish us—from the standpoint, indeed, of Jewish Christianity, but still of an enlightened, liberal, and spiritualised form of it—the delineation of the Christian as he ought to be, “as a perfect man in the perfection of the Christian life, which can only be properly conceived as a perfect work.” And from this point of view his letter was a valuable contribution to the formation of a Catholic Christianity. There is nothing harshly intended in its statement of the counter-aspect of the truth which St. Paul had proclaimed. St. Paul would himself have rebutted the one-sided distortion of his views; and he who opposes one-sided tendencies always does a useful work. It is a duty of Catholic Christianity to adjust one truth with another, and to place apparent contraries in their position of proper equilibrium.² It is inevitable—it is even desirable—that men should approach truth from many points of view. We can only hope to gain completeness of vision by combining their separate results. It is certain that we ourselves shall be more inclined, by temperament and training, to dwell on one aspect of truth than we shall on others. Yet it is not therefore necessary that we should become party men. It is possible to insist upon party truths without being tainted by party spirit. There existed at least three marked parties in the early Christian Church—the

¹ λόγος ἐμφυτός. Ja. i. 21.

² See the few but weighty remarks of Baur, *Ch. Hist.* pp. 128—130, though he unfortunately denies the genuineness of the Epistle.

parties of Jewish, of Alexandrian, and of Pauline Christianity. There were many Christians who would not identify themselves with any of these parties, but who aimed at being many-sided, conciliatory, catholic. Now St. James stood at the head of the party of Jewish Christians, though his followers thrust him more prominently into this position than he would have himself desired.¹ But if we would see the depth of difference which separates him from the Jewish Christians to whom the party-view was everything, and the common Christianity was, by comparison, as nothing, we shall be able to judge of it by reading his Epistle side by side with the poisonous innuendoes and rancorous calumnies of the pseudo-Clementines. *Their* polemic consisted in secretly maligning the views and character of the Apostle of the Gentiles. The polemic of St. James issued in the delineation of the moral character of a Christian man. The party controversialists only fostered mutual hatred and opposition; St. James drew so noble a picture of Christian faithfulness that, as has well been said, "a Church which lived in sincere accordance with his lessons would in no respect dishonour the Christian name."

In proceeding to examine the Epistle of St. James, we shall do so with deeper interest if we bear in mind that it is yet another appeal of a great Christian writer to Jews and Jewish Christians shortly before the final destruction of their separate nationality. St. Paul had shown them the eternal superiority of the new to the old covenant. St. Peter had shown them how Christianity was the true kingdom, the royal priesthood, the

¹ Acts xv. 24, "to whom we gave no such commandment."

theocratic inheritance. Apollos, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, had furnished them with a masterly proof that Christians had the true priesthood, which could alone admit any man into the heavenly sanctuary. St. James calls them to obey the royal Law, the law of liberty. Thus they had been shown by St. Paul and Apollos that the rejection of Christianity, or apostasy from it, was the rejection of, or apostasy from, grace to sin—from the substance to the shadow. St. Peter had warned them against murmuring and faithless impatience; St. James sternly sets before them the perils of insincerity and double-mindedness. And the common message of all is that Jews who had embraced the faith of Christ should hope and endure, and be faithful unto the end.

vii. In one respect the Epistle is unique. Alone of the twenty Epistles of the New Testament, it begins with no benediction, and ends with no message of peace.¹ We might, perhaps, see in this fact a reflexion of the unbending character of the writer. He was a man who in many respects stood alone, and whose manner it was to say what he had to say without formula or preamble, in the fewest and simplest words. The times demanded sternness and brevity. They resembled the days which had called forth the sixfold woe of Isaiah" on greed, and luxury, and unbelief, and pride, and injustice, and the reversal of moral truths; and which had forced him to end those

¹ This might be said also of the First Epistle of St. John; but that Epistle—even if we do not accept the view that it was sent to accompany the Gospel—has no epistolary address, and is partly of the nature of a treatise.

² Is. v. 1—30.

woes with the denunciation of terrible retribution. Hollow professions of religion, empty shows and shadows of faith, partiality and respect of persons, slavish idolatry of riches, observance of some of God's commandments, together with open and impious defiance of others; arrogant assumption of the office of religious teaching without due call and authority; encouragement and patronage of those who set themselves up to be spiritual guides; sins of the tongue; evil speaking against man and God; envying and strife; factions and party feuds; wars and fightings; adulteries; pride and revelry; sordid worldliness and presumptuous self-confidence; a Babel-like building up of secular plans and projects, independently of God's will, and against it; vainglorious display of wealth; hard-heartedness towards those by whose industry that wealth is acquired; self-indulgence and sensuality; an obstinate continuance in that temper of unbelief which rejected and crucified Christ; "these," as we see from this Epistle, "were the sins of the last days of Jerusalem; for these she was to be destroyed by God; for these she *was* destroyed; and her children have been scattered abroad, and have now been outcasts for near two thousand years. . . . Amid such circumstances, St. James, the Apostle and Bishop of Jerusalem, wrote this Epistle—an Epistle of warning to Jerusalem—the last warning it received from the Holy Spirit of God. He thus discharged the work of a Hebrew Prophet and of a Christian Apostle. He came forth as a Christian Jeremiah and a Christian Malachi. A Jeremiah in denouncing woe; a Malachi sealing up the roll of Divine prophecy to Jerusalem: and not to Jerusalem only, but to the Jews throughout the world,

who were connected with Jerusalem by religious worship and by personal resort to its great festal anniversaries. The Epistle of St. James is the farewell voice of Hebrew prophecy.”¹ •

¹ Bishop Wordsworth, whom I quote the more gladly because I dissent widely from his exegetical views.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

“Christianorum omnis religio sine scelere et macula vivere.”—LAC-TANTIUS.

“What a noble man speaks in this Epistle! Deep unbroken patience in suffering! Greatness in poverty! Joy in sorrow! Simplicity, sincerity, firm direct confidence in prayer! . . . How he wants action! Action! not words, not dead faith!”—HERDER.

As we have now learnt all that we can about the author of the Epistle, and the circumstances under which he wrote, we shall be in a better position to understand rightly his solemn teaching.

“JAMES, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,”¹—such is the title which he assumes, and the only personal word in his entire Epistle.² It was a simple title, and yet in his eyes, as in those of the other Apostles, nobler than any other badge which he could adopt, for they all felt that they were “bought with a price.” He will not call himself an Apostle,

¹ This and ii. 1 are the only passages in which the names “Jesus” or “Christ” occur, but by no means the only *references* to Him. See *supra*, p. 15. Bengel says that it might have looked like pride if he had seemed to speak too much of Jesus after the flesh. The real solution of the matter lies in the object and character of the Epistle. He does not, indeed, mention Christ in his speech (Acts xv. 14—21); but that was brief and purely special. The wording of ii. 1, and the association of Jesus with God the Father in this verse, clearly shows that to St. James the Lord was not the *ψαλς ἀνθρώπος* of the Ebionites; nor would James have called himself “a slave” of any mortal man. See *Christologie*, i. 95.

² ὑπὲρ πάντων δὲ κοσμικῶν ἡζήλωμα . . . τὸ δοῦλοι εἶναι Χριστοῦ καλλωπίζμενοι τοῦτο γένησιν εὐαντων βούλονται ποιεῖσθαι (Ecumen.); Rom. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1, etc.: 1 Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23.

because in the highest technical sense he is not an Apostle, since he is not one of the Twelve.¹ He had no need of any such title to command the attention of Christians, among whom he exercised unquestioned authority, and it was not a title which would be recognised among the unconverted Jews, whom he also desired to address. Nor, again, will he call himself “a brother of the Lord.” That was a claim which was thrust into prominence on his behalf by others, but it is not one which he would himself have approved. It reminded him, perhaps painfully, of the wasted opportunities of those years in which he had not believed on Him; nor could he forget with what marked emphasis the Lord Jesus, from the beginning of His public ministry, had set aside as of no spiritual significance the claims of fleshly relationship. Of the Risen, of the glorified, of the Eternal Christ, he was in no sense “the brother,” but “the slave.”² I cannot imagine that he would have listened without indignation to the name conferred on him by the heated partisanship of those who in after days called him “the brother of God.” The name would have shocked to its inmost depths the feeling which every Jew imbibed from the earliest training of his childhood respecting the nothingness of man and the awfulness and unapproachable majesty of God. He was, in a secondary and carnal sense, a half-brother of Jesus in His earthly humiliation; but he must have learnt from the words of the Lord Himself that this kinsmanship in the flesh could

¹ “The thirteen Apostles were appointed by the Lord; St. James, St. Clemens, and others by the Apostles” (*Apost. Constt.* ii. 55).

² Rom. i. 1; 2 Pet. i. 1; Jude 1.

hardly redeem from unconscious blasphemy a name so confusing, so unwarrantable, and so unscriptural, as "brother of God." In the only sense in which the word could have any meaning, every faithful Christian was in all respects as much "a brother of God" as he. That he was, in common parlance, "a brother of Him who was called the Christ," there was no need for him to mention. It was a fact known to every Jew of the Dispersion who visited Jerusalem at the yearly feasts, and it even stands as a description of St. James on the indifferent page of the Jewish historian.

"To the twelve tribes that are in the Dispersion,¹ giving them joy."² The ten tribes had, as a body, been indistinguishably lost among the nations into whose countries they had been transplanted;³ but there were probably some communities, and certainly many families, which had preserved their genealogy, and still took pride in the thought that they belonged to this or that tribe of ancient Israel.⁴ And the nation never lost the sense of its ideal unity. The number "twelve" was to the Jews a symbolic number.

¹ See *Life and Work of St. Paul*, i. 115 seq. The word *Diaspora* occurs in John vii. 35; 1 Pet. i. 1; and in the LXX. of Ps. cxlvi. 2; Deut. xxviii. 25.

² See *infra*, p. 36.

³ Dean Plumptre points out that the first appearance of the fiction that the Ten Tribes were somewhere preserved as one body is in 2 Esdr. xiii. 39—47, where the author says that, in the determination to keep their own statutes, "they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a farther country, where never mankind dwelt." The Talmud recognises their entire dispersion. Thus Rabbi Ashe said, 'If a Gentile should betroth a Jewess, the betrothal may not now be invalid, for he may be a descendant of one of the Ten Tribes, and so of the seed of Israel' (Yevamoth, i. 16, b). Again, "the Ten Tribes will never be restored (Deut. xxviii. 25) . . . so says R. Akhiva" (Sanhedrin, f. 110, b).

⁴ *E.g.*, the widow Anna, who was of the tribe of Asher.

"Three" was to them the sacred number, the number of Spirit, the number of the life that is in God; "four" was the number which symbolised Divine Providence; "twelve" (4×3) was the number of Heavenly completeness, the number of the consummation of the Kingdom of God.¹ Hence St. Paul also speaks of "the *dodekaphulon*,"² our "twelve-tribed nation," and St. John, in the Apocalypse, echoes in various forms³ the conception of the Elect of the Twelve Tribes in Heaven which had been involved in the promise of Christ, "Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel."⁴

It is a curious and undesigned coincidence that this letter, and the encyclical letter from the Church of Jerusalem, of which St. James was the main author, are the only two Christian letters in the New Testament which begin with the greeting "giving them joy."⁵ It was distinctively the Greek salutation. The Jewish was *Shalom*—"Peace."⁶ St. Paul, wishing to combine in his salutations all that was most blessed alike in ethnic and in spiritual life, combines the two national methods of salutation in his *χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη*, "grace and peace," which in his pastoral Epistles is tenderly amplified into "grace, mercy, and peace."

¹ See Herzog, *Real. Encycl.* s. v. *Zahlen*; Lange, *Apocalypse*, Introd. § 6, a.

² Acts xxvi. 7.

³ 12 tribes; 24 elders; 12,000 of each tribe; 144,000 of the followers of the Lamb, etc. The latter number is so far from being narrowly restrictive, that it stands for a number ideally complete.

⁴ Matt. xix. 28; Rev. vii. 5—8.

⁵ Acts xv. 23, *χαίρειν*. The word also occurs in the Greek letter of Claudius Lysias to Felix (Acts xxiii. 26), and in that of Antiochus in 2 Macc. ix. 19. Its recurrence here is one of the undesigned coincidences between this letter and the account given of St. James in the Acts.

⁶ Is. xlviii. 22; lvii. 21, where *Shalom* is rendered *χαίρειν* by the LXX.

I have here rendered the word by “giving them joy”¹ because it forms the transition to the opening passage, “My brethren, count it all joy.” This mode of transition by the repetition of a word—which is technically known as *duadiplosis*—is very characteristic of this Epistle, and forms, in fact, the writer’s ordinary method of passing from one paragraph to another.² The remainder of the chapter—the phraseology of which I will endeavour to elucidate in the notes, and the general bearing in the text—runs as follows:—

“Count it all joy,³ my brethren,⁴ when ye suddenly fall into varied temptations,⁵ recognising that the testing of your faith⁶ works endurance; but let endurance have a perfect work,⁷ that ye may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing⁸ (i. 2—4).

“But if any one of you lacks wisdom,⁹ let him ask from God, who

¹ Comp. 2 John 10, 11. The absence of any opening benediction may be due to the *general* character of the letter.

² Thus we have ver. 1, χαρρην; ver. 2, χάραν; ὑπομονήν, ver. 3, ἡ δὲ ὑπομονή; ver. 4, λειπόμενοι, ver. 5, εἰ δὲ τις λείπεται; ver. 6, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος, &c.; and so throughout.

³ πῶσαν χαρὰν, *merum gaudium, citel Freude*. Comp. Luke vi. 22, 23; Acts v. 41; Col. i. 24.

⁴ The perpetual recurrence of this word shows that the wounds which St. James inflicts are meant to be the faithful wounds of a friend.

⁵ περιπέσητε of sudden accidents, as λησταῖς περιέπεσεν, Luke x. 30; περιπεσόντες δὲ εἰς τόπον διθάλασσον. The word ποικίλος literally means “many-coloured.” Comp. ἐπιθυμίαις ποικίλαις, 1 Tim. iii. 6. The word “temptations” includes all forms of trial: Luke xxii. 28; Acts xx. 19. Persecution was rife at this time: 1 Thess. ii. 14; Heb. xi. 32, 33.

⁶ Verse 3, τὸ δοκίμουν ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως. St. Peter (1 Pet. i. 7) uses the same phrase, and the coincidence can hardly be accidental.

⁷ Matt. xxiv. 13;—ὁ δὲ ὑπομένειν εἰς τέλος σωθήσεται.

⁸ “The work of God,” says Alford, “in a man is the man.” The word τέλειος is a favourite one with St. James (i. 3, 4, 17, 25; iii. 2), borrowed, doubtless, from the words of our Lord (Matt. v. 48; xix. 21). Ὁλόκληρος is also used by St. Paul (1 Thess. v. 28), and means “well regulated in every part” (Acts iii. 16). Philo and Josephus use it for *unblemished* sacrificial victims.

⁹ “Wisdom” with St. James is evidently that practical wisdom which surpasses knowledge (γνώσις), because it not only knows truth, but acts

giveth to all simply¹ and upbraideth not,² and it shall be given him³ (5).

"But let him ask in faith,⁴ nothing doubting,⁵ for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea wind-driven⁶ and tossed about. For let not that person think that he shall receive anything⁷ from the Lord—a double-minded man,⁸ unsettled in all his ways⁹ (6—8).

upon that knowledge (*Elym. Magn.*). Comp. iii. 15—17; 1 Cor. xii. 8; Col. ii. 3.

¹ ἀπλῶς. So in Rom. xii. 8 we are bidden to grow in "simplicity."

² The meaning of this expression is best seen from Eccles. xx. 15, where it is said of the fool, "He giveth little, and upbraideth much; he openeth his mouth like a crier; to-day he lendeth, and to-morrow he will ask. Such an one is to be hated of God and man;" Id. xli. 22, "After thou hast given, upbraid not" (μὴ ἐνέδιζε). The "*exprobratio beneficii*" (Ter. *Andr.* i. 1) i.e., the casting in the teeth of others what we have done for them—is a vice of all ages.

³ See 1 Kings iii. 11, 12, "Because thou hast asked this thing (wisdom), behold, I have done according to thy word," Luke xi. 13; Eccles. vii. 10, "Be not fainthearted when thou makest thy prayer." We see here that by "faith" St. James means undivided confidence in God.

⁴ See v. 15; Matt. xxi. 22, "All things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

⁵ Διακρινόμενος, Matt. xxi. 21, "If ye have faith and doubt not (μὴ διακρίθῃτε), ye shall do not only the miracle of the fig-tree, but," &c.; Rom. iv. 20, Abraham οὐ διακρίθη τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. "When faith says 'yes' and unbelief says 'no,'" says Huther, "to doubt (διακρίνεσθαι) is the union of 'yes' and 'no,' but so that 'no' is the weightier. The deep-lying ground of it is pride." Dean Plumptre quotes from Tenneyson—

"Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers,
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all."

⁶ ἀνεμίζομενός καὶ ῥιπζομενός. The words occur here only, and κλύδων ("billow") only in Luke viii. 24; but we have the metaphor in Is. lvii. 20; Eph. iv. 14. The words well express the state of tumultuous excitement which preceded the Jewish War.

⁷ That is, "any special answer to prayer."

⁸ Ἀνὴρ δίψυχος. "The man who has two souls in conflict with each other." This striking expression occurs only at iv. 8. Rabbi Tanchum (*f.* 84) on Deut. xxvi. 17 gives a close parallel, "Let not those who pray have two hearts, one directed to God, one to something else." Comp. 1 Kings xviii. 21; Ps. xii. 2, "a double heart" (*lit.* "a heart and a heart"); Eccles. i. 28, "Come not unto the Lord with a double heart;" Is. ii. 12, "Woe be to . . . the sinner that goeth two ways;" Matt. vi. 24, "No man can serve two masters." The passage is imitated in "The Shepherd of Hermas" (*Mandat.* ix.).

⁹ Ἀκατάστατος. A classical expression (again) found only in St. James

"But let the humble brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation,¹ because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.² For the sun ariseth with the burning wind, and drieth the grass, and its flower fadeth away, and the beauty of its aspect perisheth;³ so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings⁴ (9-11).

"Blessed is the man⁵ who endureth temptation, for when he has been approved he shall receive the garland of the life⁶ which He promised⁷ to those who love Him" (12).

"Let no one who is being tempted say, 'I am being tempted from God.' For God is out of the sphere of evils,⁹ and Himself

(iii. 8). Comp. Is. liv. 11, "tossed with tempest;" Ἀκαταστασία, iii. 16; Luke xxi. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 33, &c. It is one who "never continueth in one stay" (Job xiv. 2).

¹ For the different views taken of this verse see *infra*, p. 43. *Καυχᾶσθαι* is literally "to boast." Rom. ii. 17, &c.

² For the metaphor, specially suitable to the brief life of flowers in the scorching heat of Palestine, see Is. xl. 6, 7; Ps. cii. 15; Job. xiv. 2; 1 Pet. i. 24; Wisd. ii. 12, "Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered;" riches are no "unwithering inheritance" (1 Pet. i. 4) as the kingdom of God is.

³ The aorist tenses show us the whole story, so to speak. The *kausôn* is usually taken to mean the *kadîm*, or simoom, as in Jonah iv. 8; the "east wind" of Ezek. xvii. 10; xix. 12; "the wind of the Lord from the wilderness" of Hos. xiii. 15; but may mean merely "scorching heat;" Matt. xx. 12; Luke xii. 55.

⁴ *Μαρτυρήσεται* only in Wisd. ii. 8 and Job xv. 30 (LXX.). *πορεύς* is the best-supported reading, and alludes, perhaps, to travels for purposes of gain, &c. (iv. 13). (Δ, *πορεύς*, "gettings.")

⁵ ἀνὴρ—"non mollis nec effeminatus sed vir" (Thos. Aquin.).

⁶ There is no special reference to athletes (Ps. xxi. 3; Rev. ii. 10; Wisd. v. 16).

⁷ The "He" (as in *κ*, A, B) is more emphatic than if he had inserted "the Lord," and seems to show how early the Talmudic method of reference had begun.

⁸ Amor parit patientiam (Bengel).

⁹ ἀπειραστος occurs here only. It means (1) "untempted," and (2) "one who does not tempt." Luther follows the Vulgate in understanding it to mean "does not try evil men" (*intimator malorum est*), or "is not a tempter of yvell things" (Wiclif); but this St. James has said already. It seems to mean "has nothing to do with evil things," and therefore "cannot tempt men to evil. Ecumenius quotes a heathen saying, "The Divine neither suffers troubles nor causes them to others." "Why, then, is it said that God did tempt Abraham in Gen. xix. 3? That means that

tempteth no one, but each is ever tempted when he is being drawn forth¹ and enticed by his own desire.² Then the desire, having conceived, bears sin; but sin, when full grown, brings forth death (13—15).³

"Be not deceived, my brethren beloved. Every good giving and every perfect gift⁴ is from above, descending from the Father of the Lights,⁵ with whom there is no varying nor shadow of turning.⁶

He tried Abraham, not from evil motives to an evil end, but from good motives to a good end" (Aug.).

¹ Prov. xxx. 13 (LXX.). The word may be used of "dragging a prey to land," as in Hdt. ii. 76, and so we might take the metaphor to be one from fishing. The word *δεδαιζόμενος* may also mean "enticing with a bait," as in 2 Pet. ii. 14, 18; Xen. *Mem.* ii. 1, § 6. But the further expansion of the metaphor shows that he is thinking of the enticement of the harlot *Sense* (Prov. vii. 16—23), to which in classical and Hellenistic usage the words are equally applicable (Hom. *Od.* π. 294; Arist. *Polit.* v. 10. *Testam. XII. Patriarch.* p. 702); and especially Plutarch's *De Ser. Nun. Vindict.*; "the sweetness of desire, like a bait (*δέλεαρ*), entices (*ἐξέλκει*) men."

² "No man taketh harm but by himself;" "passion becomes to each his own God;" "*sibi cuique Deus fit dira cupido*" (Virg. *Æn.* ix. 185).

³ Milton expands the metaphor into an allegory in *Par. Lost*, ii. 745—814. Lange points out the varying expressions of the New Testament: "Sin brings forth death" (James); "death is the wages of sin" (Paul); "sin is death" (John).

⁴ This forms in the original a perfect hexameter, except that the last syllable of *δόσις* is lengthened—

πάντα δόσις ἀγαθὴ καὶ πᾶν δῶρημα τέλειον.

On these metrical phrases see note on Heb. xii. 14. *δῶρημα* only occurs in Rom. v. 16. "From above" (John iii. 3, 7, 31; xix. 11). Bishop Andrewes, in two sermons on this text, says the *δόσις ἀγαθὴ* refers to the gifts of eternal life; the *δῶρημα τέλειον* the treasures laid up for us in eternity.

⁵ By "the lights" is meant probably "the heavenly bodies," as in Ps. cxxxvi. 7; Jer. iv. 23, called in Gen. i. 14 *φωστῆρες*, which is metaphorically applied to Christians (John v. 35; Phil. ii. 15). The "Father" then means the Creator (comp. Job xxxviii. 28, "Hath the rain a father?"). Some explain it of angels and spirits, and of Him who is the "Light of the world" (John ix. 5). But the question is not what meaning the words may be made to include, but what meaning they originally had.

⁶ The words are curious—*παρὰλλαγή ἢ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα*. The first word is a *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament (but see 2 Kings ix. 20, LXX.), and has been understood to be a technical term of astronomy, like *parallax*. But in Epictet. i. 14 it merely means "change," even in an

Because He willed it, He brought us forth by the word of truth that we might be in some sense¹ a first fruit of His creatures² (16—18).

"Ye know,³ my brethren beloved. But let everyone be swift to listening, slow to speaking,⁴ slow to wrath. For the wrath of a man (*ἀνδρὸς*) worketh not the righteousness of God. Therefore laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of malice, receive in meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls.⁵ But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not hearers only, misleading yourselves (Col. ii. 4; Luke xi. 28). For if any one is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, this person is like a man⁶ contemplating the face of his birth in a mirror. For he contemplated himself, and has gone away,⁷ and immediately forgot what kind of person he was. But he who has stooped down to gaze⁸ into a perfect law, the law of

astronomical sentence; and Plotinus speaks of "a change (*παράλλαξις*) of days to nights." It seems, however, to have a semi-technical connexion with astronomy. *Ἀποσκίασμα* is also a *ἡμῶν λεγόμενον*, and *τροπαὶ ἡλίου* means "the solstices" (see Job xxxviii. 33). Here, however, there seems to be a general allusion to the changes and revolutions of the sun, moon, and stars (Wisd. vii. 17—19), as compared with the sun which never sets. Comp. 1 John i. 5, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" Ps. cxxxix. 11.

¹ *ἀπαρχήν*. The *τινα* shows that he is using a new metaphor.

² On the great theological importance of this verse—all the more noticeable because the Epistle is predominantly practical—see *infra*, p. 48.

³ The true reading seems to be *ἴστε*, A, B, C (Heb. xii. 17; Eph. v. 5). Its very abruptness probably caused the variations of the MSS.

⁴ Ecclus. v. 11: "Be swift to hear . . . and with patience give answer;" "Thou hast two ears and one mouth" (Rückert). Œcumenius here quotes the proverb that "no one ever repented of having been silent," and every one will be reminded of the proverb, "Speech is silver, Silence is golden" (Prov. xiii. 3, &c.; Eccl. v. 2)—Philo has the phrase, "slow to benefit, swift to injure." The Jews were ever "slow to hear" (Heb. v. 11; x. 25).

⁵ It is able, for it is a power of God (Rom. i. 16). Without it they are unable, whether by outward works (as Pharisees said) or by determination of will (as Sadducees said) to be saved. On *ἐμφυτος*, see p. 49.

⁶ *ἀνδρῶν*. Some have referred the term to the comparative carelessness of *men* in looking at mirrors (1 Cor. xiii. 12; Wisd. vii. 26; Ecclus. xii. 12), but it is doubtful whether St. James intends any special distinctiveness in the word (see vers. 8—12).

⁷ *ἀπέληλυθεν*, *perf.* The tenses make the image more graphic.

⁸ The true meaning of the word will be seen by a reference to Luke xxiv. 12— "Stooping down and looking in"; Ecclus. xiv. 23; John xx. 5, 11; 1 Pet. i. 12 (see the note on that verse). Doubtless St. James thought,

liberty,¹ and has stayed to gaze,² proving himself not a hearer who forgets, but a doer who works, he shall be blessed in his doing" (19—25).

"If any one fancies that he is 'religious' while he is not bridling his tongue (iii. 2, 3), but is deceiving his own heart, this man's religious service is profitless. A religious service pure and undefiled⁵ before our God and Father is this—to take care of orphans and widows in their affliction (Ex. xxii. 22—24; Acts vi. 1), to keep himself unspotted from the world"⁶ (26, 27).

in passing, of the Cherubim bending down over the Ark as though to gaze continually on the revelation of God's will in the moral law. See on this word Coleridge (*Aids to Reflection*, p. 15), "A more happy and forcible word could not have been chosen to express the nature and ultimate object of reflection."

¹ "Legum servi sumus ut liberi esse possimus" (Cic.). We have seen already that St. James's ideal of the Law is not that of Moses (Acts xv. 10; Gal. v. 1, but comp. Ps. xix. 8—11), but that of the Sermon on the Mount (ii. 8; v. 12; John viii. 32), the law of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 2), the law of faith (Rom. iii. 27).

² Notice the antithesis, παρακύψας, παραμείνας, οὐκ ἀκροατῆς ἐπιλησμοσύνης, as against κατενόησεν, ἀπελήλυθεν, ἐπελάθετο.

³ "Ut ipsa actio sit beatitudo" (Schneckenburger).

⁴ Θρησκεία means ritual service, external observance; "gay religions, full of pomp and gold" (Acts xxvi. 5), which (as we see from Col. ii. 18, the only other place where the word occurs in the New Testament) have a perpetual tendency to degenerate into superfluous and self-satisfying human ordinances (ἐθελοθρησκεία), and even, to use the bold coinage of a later writer, ἐθελοπερισσοθρησκεία. It is the peril and disease of the externally virtuous—vice corrupting virtue itself into pride and intolerance. Hence the θρηῆσκος is one who plumes himself on his outward service. This paragraph illustrates the "slowness to speak," as the last did the "swiftness to hear." Obtrusiveness in talk is a natural consequence of a spurious religion.

⁵ The Jewish notion of defilement was very different (John xviii. 28; Lev. v. 3, and *passim*; comp. Eccles. xxxv. 14). For "the fatherless and widows" (where "respect of persons" is also alluded to), and for the general thought, compare Mark vii. 20—23; Luke xi. 40.

⁶ St. James would feel this duty all the more keenly, and would feel that *this*, and not the performance of outward religious duties was what God really desired, because the day had been when he too was of the world, for which reason the world which hated Christ had not hated him (John vii. 7). By "the world" is here meant everything in the world, and in the worldly life which tempts to sin (1 Tim. vi. 14). With this thought compare John xvii. 15; 1 Tim. v. 22. With the general thought of the

I have broken the chapter into brief sections to indicate as far as possible the transitions of thought. Special difficulties of expression are, I hope, sufficiently elucidated in the appended notes, and the very literal translation will show what I believe to be the best reading and construction. ~~But~~ there are one or two general points in the chapter which require notice.

i. It will be observed that St. James begins at once with the subject of temptation, using the word in its broadest sense of all forms of trial. It includes both outward persecution—from which the Churches of scattered Jews, whether converted or unconverted, were always liable, from the common hatred which Pagans felt for them—and those inward temptations which are often closely connected with outward circumstances. St. James shows his readers how to turn these temptations into blessings, by making them a source of patient endurance, and so using them as the fire which purges and tests the fine gold. For the Christian should aim at such perfection¹ (i. 2—4).

ii. Now for perfection he needs wisdom² most of all; and if he lacks this wisdom he has only to ask for it from One whose gifts are absolute and gracious (i. 5).

iii. Yet it is useless to ask without faith in Him to

paragraph comp. Ecclus. xxxv. 2: "He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine flour; and he that giveth alms, sacrificeth praise." The same thought is found both in Scripture (Deut. x. 12; Ps. xl. 7; xxi. 17; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Mic. vi. 6—9; Hos. vi. 6; xli. 1 &c.) and in heathen writers.

¹ The Christian aims at "endurance," not at "apathy," as the Stoic did. His endurance has "a sublimer origin, a milder character, a greater duration, a more glorious fruit" (Van Oosterzee).

² The history of the next few years shows how deeply the Jews needed this wisdom. "Wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. xi. 19); — "and she abode not at Jerusalem, but with the Christians who fled in time to Pella."

whom the petition is addressed, and without faith that it will be granted. Such faithless prayers can only arise from a wavering disposition, a want of stability, a want of whole-heartedness, a dualism of life and aim (i. 6—8).

iv. Then comes an apparently sudden transition of exhortation to rich and poor.¹ That the transition was not so sudden in the mind of the writer is shown by his connecting particle. "The man of two souls," he says, "is restless in all his ways; *but* let the humble brother rejoice." The unexpressed connexion seems to be, "Now, what is the cause of this spiritual distraction and instability? Does it not arise from worldliness? Well, *ye cannot serve God and Mammon*. If, then, any brother be poor and humble, let him rejoice in his exaltation. For if he take it rightly his earthly humiliation is his true dignity. He is enjoying the beatitude of poverty. It is something like the thought expressed so tersely by our great philosopher,² "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, Adversity is the blessing of the New" (i. 9).

v. "But the rich," he adds, "in his humiliation." The meaning of these words is not clear. It has even been supposed by some that the words "rich" and "poor" are used in this Epistle in a metaphorical sense.³

¹ So in Shemoth Rabba (§ 31, f. 129) we find, "Blessed is the man who stands in his temptation; for there is no man whom God does not try. He tries the rich, to see if they will open their hands to the poor; He tries the poor, to see if they will not murmur," &c.

² Lord Bacon.

³ Lange thinks that by "the brethren of low degree" are meant Jews and Jewish Christians, and by the rich the Gentiles; for, he says, the rich Jews have always been kind to the poor. I think I have already met this difficulty. It is surely extravagant to say that "the rich man with a gold ring and splendid garment denotes the proud Ebionitish Jewish

Another discussion turns on the question whether by "the rich" we are here to understand rich Christians, or rich Jews and Gentiles. I feel convinced that the words are to be understood in their primary meaning. As I have already explained, St. James is not thinking of Gentiles at all, and is drawing no marked distinction between Jews and Christians. A further question is, are we to understand this phrase hortatively in the sense of "but let the rich man boast in his humiliation," or as a contrast, "but the rich man rejoices or glories in that which is in reality his humiliation"?¹ In the one case it is an exhortation to the rich man as to what he *ought* to do; in the other a censure upon him for what he *does*. Neither interpretation is without difficulty, but on the whole the meaning seems to be that worldliness, with the temptations which it brings, is full of dangers. Poverty and riches stand in God's estimation in reverse positions. Humble poverty is true wealth. Pampered wealth is real poverty.² Let the poor brother glory in the beatitude of poverty; it is a gift of God. The rich brother, then, is worse off, is in a worse position, than he—his riches are his humiliation in the heavenly order, for they are a temptation to which he is only too liable to succumb; they tend to make him more of a worldling, less of a Christian. Such views belong to the so-called Ebionitism of St. James. But the opinions of the Ebionites were due to the falsehood

Christian *parading his sins of the Jewish Covenant* (!), while the poor man, with a vile garment, describes the Gentile Christian" (*Introd.* p. 27). This is to introduce into New Testament exegesis fancies borrowed from Lessing and Swift.

¹ This would resemble Phil. iii. 19, "whose glory is in their shame." Compare the saying of Pascal about man—"Gloire et rebut de l'Univers, s'il se vante, je l'abaisse; s'il s'abaisse, je le vante."

² *Matt.* v. 3.

of extremes. Neither is wealth in itself a sin, nor poverty in itself a virtue. They are conditions of life in which God has placed us, each liable to its own, and each to *different* temptations. But as regards those days—perhaps as regards all periods—riches were liable to severer temptations than poverty. In the teaching of St. James we recognise, not the exaggerations of Ebionitism, but the impression left by the sermons and parables of Christ ¹ (i. 10).

vi. And the reason why the rich brother should glory in the humiliation which the world regards as his enviable superiority is that reason which Isaiah had so exquisitely expressed, and to which St. Peter also refers.² It is the transitoriness of riches.³ Often, even in this brief life, they make themselves wings and fly away. But they must always pass away with the fading flower of life; not even the poorest fragment of them can be held by the relaxing hand of death. Is that a condition to glory in, which Christ showed to be surrounded with peril, and which must soon become like a withered blossom in a dead man's hand? (i. 11).

vii. But whether our trial comes in the form of wealth or of poverty it becomes a beatitude if it works in us the spirit of patient endurance. And here it is necessary for St. James to introduce a strong caution.

¹ Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14. The commoner view of the clause is "Let the rich man rejoice *when he is humiliated* by the "spoiling of his goods" (Heb. x. 34). But (1) this loss of wealth happens only to a few. (2) He is throughout addressing "rich men," who are in the full flower of their prosperity.

² Is. xl. 6; 1 Pet. i. 24 (comp. Matt. vi. 30; xiii. 26).

³ Some refer the passage chiefly to reverses in life. "The rich man, overtaken by judgment, perishes in the midst of his doings and pursuits, as the flower, in the midst of its blessings, falls a victim to the scorching heat of the sun" (Huther).

The word which he has used for temptation is capable of two meanings—trial in the sense of a difficult and painful test (*adversa pati*); and trial in the sense of strong impulse to sin (*malis ad defectionem sollicitari*). In the first sense it comes from God; it is a part of His providential ordering of our lives. In the second sense it by no means comes from God.¹ When a man pleads, as men have so often done, that “God has made them so;”² or that “the flesh is weak,” or that “God for a moment deserted them;”³ when they say that they have done wrong because they could not do otherwise;⁴ when they contend that each man is practically no better than an automaton, and that his actions are the inevitable—and therefore irresponsible—result of the conditions by which he is surrounded—they are transferring to God the blame of their misdoings. “The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart

¹ The history of temptation, says Bede, is (1) Suggestion; (2) Delight; (3) Consent. Suggestion is of the enemy, delight and consent from our own frailty. If the birth of a wrong action follows the delight of the heart, the enemy leaves us as a victor, and we are liable to death.” “Lust is the mother of sin, sin the mother of death, the sinner the parent of both” (Macknight).

² St. Paul deals with this question—“Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?” (Rom. ix. 19.)

³ “Seems there any recess? It is we forsake Him; not He us (Jer. ii. 17)” (Bishop Andrewes).

⁴ The unhappy Henry II., shortly before his death, passionately exclaimed to God, “Since Thou hast taken from me the town I loved best . . . I will have my revenge on Thee too. I will rob Thee of that thing Thou lovest most in me.” see Green’s *Hist. of Engl.* I. p. 181). There can be little doubt that St. James had in his mind a magnificent passage of Eccles. xv. 11–17, “Say not thou, ‘It is through the Lord that I fell away:’ for thou oughtest not to do the things that He hateth. Say not thou ‘He hath caused me to err.’ for He hath no need of the sinful man. . . . He hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt. Before man is life and death, and whether him liketh, shall be given him.”

fretteth against the Lord.”¹ The doctrine of fatalism is but a poor and false excuse for crime.² When passively accepted it paralyses every nerve of moral effort; when it takes the form of materialism, and poses as the final result of science, it lays the axe at the root of every motive by which men rise to the dignity of free and moral beings. Men become the children of God by obedience to His laws, resulting not from necessity, but choice. And so St. James gives the true genesis of sin. It springs from lust—desire—the *yetser-ha-rá*, or evil impulse, which plays so large a part in later Jewish literature. This is to each soul the harlot-temptress which draws him forth from the safe shelter of innocence, entices him, and bears the evil offspring of committed sin. But the bad genealogy ends not there. Sin, too, grows to maturity, and the offspring of her incestuous union is death (i. 12—15).

viii. No, God is not the author of evil; it is only every *good* gift which comes from Him. “God is always in the meridian.”³ He dwells in the *φῶς ἀέσπερον*, in the light whereof there is no eventide, the sun whereof knows no tropic. No darkness can flow from the fountain of that unchanging Sun, which is not liable to the parallax and eclipses of the heavenly bodies which He has made.⁴ And then, in one singularly pregnant clause which—although in this respect

¹ Prov. xix. 3.

² It was familiar to St. James for, as Josephus says, it was a doctrine of the Pharisees (*Antl.* xviii. 1, § 3; *B. J.* ii. 8, § 14). ³ Wetstein.

⁴ “Though the lights of heaven have their parallaxes, yea the angels of heaven He found not steadfastness in them” (Job iv. 18); yet for God, He is subject to none of them. He is ‘*Ego sum qui sum*’ (Ex. iii. 14), that is, saith Malachi, ‘*Ego Deus et non mutor*’ (Mal. iii. 6). We are not what we were awhile since, what we shall be awhile after, scarce what we are; for every moment makes us vary. With God it is nothing so. He

it stands somewhat isolated — shows how little the practical tendency of the author was dissevered from deep dogmatic insight, he tells us of God's *most* perfect gift to us. He tells us that we need a new life; that God by one great act has bestowed it upon us; that this act sprang from His own free will and choice;¹ that the instrument of this new birth was the word of truth,² the Divine revelation of God to man, which, of course, requires faith in them that hear it; that the result of this new birth is our dedication as "the first fruits of a sacrificial gift"³ which shall only be completed with the offering up of all God's creatures. Thus in one brief sentence he concentrates many solemn truths, and even by the one word, "of His own will" (*βουληθεῖς*), he repudiates alike the dangerous fatalism of the Pharisees, and the arrogant assertion of the

is that He is; He is and changeth not" (Bishop Andrewes, Sermon. iii. 374; John viii. 58).

¹ God is the cause of His own mercy. "Unde sequitur naturale esse Deo benefacere" (Calvin). See John i. 13; 1 Pet. i. 23. *βουληθεῖς*, "voluntate amantissimā, liberrimā, purissimā, foecundissimā" (1 John i. 13; 1 Pet. i. 3). *Ἀπεκύρσεν*, the antithesis to the *ἀποκρίει* of sin, in ver. 17, "Ipse Deus *Patris et matris loco est*" (Bengel) (Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iii. 26; 1 Pet. i. 23).

² John xvii. 17, "Sanctify them by Thy truth. Thy word is Truth." 1 Pet. i. 23, "Having been born again by the word of the Living God." It is the equivalent to the Gospel (2 Tim. ii. 15; Eph. i. 13). "The lying word of the serpent has corrupted us, but the true word of God makes us good again" (Luther). Here and elsewhere, some (e.g. Athanasius) give to "the Word" its specific Johannine sense, and interpret it of Christ, the Divine Logos. No doubt it may be *made* to bear this meaning in this and many other passages; but in this letter was addressed to the Jews of the Dispersion, of whom many had no Alexandrian training or Alexandrian sympathies, the question is, (1) Would they so have understood it? and, therefore, (2) Did St. James intend it so to be understood?

³ "First-fruit" (see Lev. xxi. 10; Deut. xvi. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 22; xvi. 15; Rom. xiv. 4). Christ is the true first-fruit, and then we in Him (Rom. viii. 19-22). See a valuable note of Wiesinger, who was the first to call due attention to the depth and importance of this verse.

Sadducees that salvation lies within the power of our own unaided will (i. 16—18).

ix. They know this; but let them apply it—let them listen to this word of truth, hearing more, speaking less, wrangling not at all. Passionate fanaticism does not help forward God's righteousness. It deceives itself when it brings into God's service that impure mixture of human evil.¹ The Gospel is meant to be used for our own sanctification, not to be abused to quarrelsomeness with others. God's word, implanted in the heart,² is powerful to save, but the condition of its power is its meek reception. It requires steady, earnest contemplation, not a mere hasty passing gaze. There were many, both Jews and Christians, who were absorbed in outward service³—who were content with endless ablutions and purifications, and not with what is true, pure, unspotted, and undefiled; who made long prayers, and yet devoured widows' houses. But all service is fruitless if it does not lead a man to refrain from bitter words. The only pure and perfect ritual is active love,⁴ and a freedom from "the contagions of the world's slow stain."⁵

¹ "Purius sine ira fit" (Bengel). There is always a germ of the atheistical in the heat of fanaticism (Nitsch), as in Jonah's, "I do well to be angry." Lange observes that Simeon and Levi, the ancestors of the Jews in fanaticism, were disapproved by Jacob (Gen. xxiv. 49), but afterwards upheld as patterns (Judith ix. 20).

² Perhaps an allusion to the Parable of the Sower, and so parallel with Matt. xiii. 23. The word *ἐμψυτος* only occurs in Wisd. xii. 10. In classic Greek it means also "*innate*," but this does not furnish so simple a meaning, though it may be compared with such passages as Col. ii. 16, "as ye have received Christ, so walk ye in Him."

³ See Dr. Mozley's admirable sermon on the Pharisees. "Qui crassiora vitia exuerunt, huic morbo sunt ut plurimum obnoxii" (Calvin).

⁴ Comp. Tobit i. 16, 17.

⁵ "The outward service (*θρησκεία*) of ancient religion, the rites, cere-

He proceeds, in the second chapter, to rebuke the respect of persons,¹ the worldly partialities, which are so alien to "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the glory."² That faith teaches before all things the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Since in God's sight all are equal—since in the eye of His Church the greatest princess is but "this woman," and the proudest emperor but "this man"—was it not most unworthy to thrust oppressive disparities into prominence in a wrong place by ushering the gold-ringed man³ in the bright dress into the best seat in the synagogue,⁴ while they made the squalidly dressed pauper⁵ stand anywhere, or thrust him down into a seat on the floor. When ye acted thus, "did ye

monies, and ceremonial vestments of the old law, had morality for their substance. They were the letter of which morality was the spirit; the enigma of which morality was the meaning. But morality itself is the service and ceremonial (*cultus exterior*, *θρησκεία*) of the Christian religion" (Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, *Aph.* xxiii.).

¹ Curiously enough the Talmud says, "God is a respecter of persons," Num. vi. 26 (Berachoth, f. 20, *b*).

² Lit. "of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the glory." Bengel takes the two words in apposition—"ut ipse Christus dicatur, ἡ δόξα, *Gloria*." The Shechinah was a Jewish name for the Messiah, but it is better, as in the E. V., to understand it as "the Lord of the glory" (comp. John xvii. 5). The title here implies the utter obliteration, by comparison, of petty earthly distinctions.

³ The ostentation of gold rings was a fashion of this epoch, and Roman fops wore them even inconveniently large (Juv. *Sat.* i. 28, 30; *Mart.* xi. 60), six on each finger. Lucian (*Somm.* 12) speaks of wearing sixteen heavy rings. "All fingers are loaded with rings" (Plin. *H. N.* xxxiii. 6).

⁴ "A synagogue" is, on the whole, the best supported reading (A. B. C). The passage is not a mere rebuke to "sexton rudeness." It illustrates faithless partiality by a common instance, and this desire for prominence was largely developed among the Jews (Matt. xxiii. 6). Christians probably used Jewish synagogues (as St. Paul did) as long as they were permitted to do so.

⁵ No doubt "gold rings" and squalid apparel (Zech. iii. 3, 4; Rev. xvii. 11) may be used symbolically, but to understand this passage as an allegory

not *doubt* in yourselves,¹ and did ye not show wicked reasonings as judges?" It shows *doubt* to act as though Christ had never promised His kingdom to the poor, rich in faith;² and wicked reasonings to argue mentally that the poor *must* be less worthy of honour than the rich. It is the evil schism in the heart which leads to this evil judgment in the life. And was not this a strange method of judging, when it was the rich who played the lord over them, dragged them into law-courts,³ and blasphemed the fair name by which they were named?⁴ It were nobler to fulfil the royal law,⁵ "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and so to treat all, whether rich or poor, with equal courtesy. Not to act thus is sin. They must not regard such sin as unimportant. There is in God's law a uniform soli-

of Jewish exclusiveness towards the Gentiles (as Lange does), is very far-fetched. Notice the picturesque antitheses—

You—sit—here—honourably (near the coffer which held the Law).

You—stand—there—under my footstool (out of sight and hearing, near the door).

Even in courts of law the Jewish rule was that (to show the perfect impartiality of the law) *both* suitors, whether rich or poor, should sit, or *both* stand.

¹ διεκρίθητε. "Doubt" is the ordinary meaning of διακρίνομαι, as in i. 6; and there is no reason to change it here into "make differences, or judge," etc. (Matt. xxi. 21; Acts x. 20; Rom. iv. 20, etc.).

² Matt. v. 3; Luke vi. 20.

³ Acts vii. 12; xvii. 12; xviii. 5; xix. 38.

⁴ Literally "which was invoked over you" (Deut. xxviii. 10, etc.; Jer. xiv. 9; Am. ix. 12; Heb. xi. 16), i.e., the name of Christ. Christians were called οἱ Χριστοῦ (1 Cor. iii. 23). Nominal Christians, however rich, could hardly have ventured to "blaspheme," or "speak injuriously of," the name of Christ. St. James must be passing in thought to rich Jews, Sadducean oppressors, etc. (Acts iv. 1, 6, v. 17), though he may include the conduct of rich Christians which *caused* Christ's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles, as the Jews caused God's name to be (Rom. ii. 24; comp. 2 Sam. xii. 14).

⁵ A royal law, because the best of all laws—a king of laws. "Love is the fulfilment (πλήρωμα) of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

clarity, and one God made all the law. To break one commandment is to break all,¹ for it is to violate the principle of obedience, just as "it matters not at what particular point a man breaks his way out of an enclosure, if he is forbidden to go out of it at all."² Every separate commandment has the same Divine source. The sum total of all commandments is that law of liberty³ by which we shall be judged. That judgment shall be merciless to the merciless.⁴ And then he adds, with an emphasis all the more forcible from its brevity and abruptness: "Mercy"—whether in the heart of God or of man—"glories over judgment" (ii. 1—13).

The passage that follows is the famous passage about justification by works:—

"What is the advantage, my brethren, if any say that he has faith, but hath not works?⁶ Is the faith able to save him?⁷ But if a brother or a sister be naked, and lacking the day's food, and one

¹ "He who observes but *one* precept, secures for himself an advocate (Parklit, or Paraclete), and he who commits one sin procures for himself an accuser" (Pirke Avoth, iv. 15).

² "A garment is torn though you only take away one piece of it; a harmony in music is spoiled if only one voice be out of tune" (Starke).

³ St. James is thinking of the free service of the will to Christ's pure moral law, not of the law "which gendereth to bondage," and enforces incessant restrictions on unwilling souls (Gal. iv. 10, 24), which was a yoke which neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear (Acts xv. 10).

⁴ Matt. vii. 1.

⁶ This is a great law of the moral kingdom. It applies alike to God and to men. 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It is the reason why Christian universality is better than Judaising exclusiveness; why the geniality, love, and brightness of the Gospel is better than the gloomy hatred of the Talmud; why tolerance is better than the Inquisition; why philanthropy is nobler than sensual egotism (see Lange, p. 78).

⁶ Comp. οὐ γὰρ ὑφειλήσει τινα τὸ λέγειν ἀλλὰ τὸ ποιεῖν· ἐκ παντὸς οὖν τρόπου καλῶν ἔργων χρεία (Clem. *Hom.* viii. 7).

⁷ Not if it be the faith that St. James has in view, which is here merely a *theoretically orthodox* belief, not a *vital faith*. Such a faith cannot save such a man. Vital faith carries in itself the animating principle from

of you should say, 'Go in peace ;¹ warm yourselves and feed yourselves,' but ye give them not the necessities of the body, what is the advantage?² So also faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.³ Yea, some one may say⁴ [quite fairly], 'Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith without the works'—which you cannot do—'and I,' who do not pretend to believe in the possibility of such a faith, 'will,' very easily, 'show thee my faith by my works' " (ii. 14–18).

Assuming that the Solifidian—the believer in the possibility of an abstract faith which can show no works as an evidence of its existence—is thus refuted, St. James proceeds to refute him still farther:—" *Thou* believest that God is one."⁵ It was the proud boast of the Jew,

which words must emanate. The whole argument is aimed at those Antinomians who said, "If you have faith, it matters little how you live" (Jer. in *Mich.* iii. 5).

¹ Such a parting benediction would, without some accompanying help, be as incongruous a mockery as Claudius's reply of "*Arête vos*" to the gladiators' "*Morituri te salutamus*" (Judg. xviii. 6; 2 Kings xv. 9; Lk. vii. 50, viii. 48). Similarly, Plautus has "Of what use is your benevolent language if your help is dead?" (*Epidic.* i. 2, 13).

² St. James uses an illustration of what faith leads to, which he borrows from the teaching of Christ (Matt. xxv. 35–46).

³ Just as the compassion is dead and useless if it be that of

"The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe,
Who sigh for wretchedness yet shun the wretched,
Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their dainty loves and slothful sympathies"—(Coleridge.)

so faith is dead and useless if it do not work by love. "No spirit, if no work (*Spectrum est, non spiritus*); a flying shadow it is; a spirit it is not, if work it do not. Having wherewith to do good, if you do it not, talk not of faith, for you have no faith in you if you have wherewith to show it and show it not" (Bp. Andrewes).

⁴ 'Αλλ' ἐπεὶ τίς, is something in St. Paul's manner (1 Cor. xv. 35; Rom. ix. 19). The interlocutor is not here, however, an objector, but a Gentile Christian, who makes a perfectly true criticism of the worthlessness of an idle orthodoxy (see Tert. *De Pœnit.* 5). "Faith," says Luther, "is the mother who gives birth to the virtues as her children." And St. Paul presses the same truth quite as clearly as St. James (Rom. ii. 13).

⁵ Σὺ, emphatic; *thou*, as distinguished from the heathen. The Jews had learnt *Credere Deum*, and *Credere Deo*, but not (according to St.

who, among all the nations of antiquity, gloried in being a monotheist.

"Excellent so far; the demons also believe and shudder.¹ But wilt thou recognise, O vain man,² that faith apart from works is idle?³ Abraham, our father—was he not justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?⁴ Dost thou see that faith wrought with his works,⁵ and by works the faith was perfected?⁶ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says,⁷ 'But Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God.'⁸ Ye see that by works a

Augustine's distinction) *Credere in Deum*. This shows that St. James is thinking of some sort of verbal orthodoxy, not of specific Christian faith. The Unity of God was the very first and most important belief of Judaism. The first line of the Talmud begins with discussing it; it was daily repeated in the *Shemà* (Deut. vi. 4), to which, as to all their observances, the Jews attached most extravagant virtue. Thus they said that the fires of Gehenna would be cooled for him who repeated it with attention to its very letters. To this they attached Hab. ii. 4. All the fine things which they called *hapardes* (הפארדס), the "Garden," or "Paradise," turned on the Unity of God. Akhiva was supremely blessed because he died uttering the word "One" (see *infra*, p. 83).

¹ This unique and unexpected word (*φθασσούσι*, *horrescunt*) comes in with great rhetorical and ironic force. It explains the horror of physical antipathy. For the *fact*, see Matt. viii. 29; Mark ix. 20, 26. "The sarcasm lies in the fact itself. Formally, it only flashes out in the splendid *καί*" (Lange).

² The Hebrew רָעָא, *Râca* (Matt. v. 22). Some think that this objurgation is aimed at St. Paul! Apostles did not speak of each other in the language of modern religious controversy (see Pirke Avoth, i. 17).

³ ἀργή, B. C.

⁴ St. Paul does not refer to this act, which is indeed only alluded to in Heb. xi. 17 (and Wisd. x. 5), but to the faith which Abraham had shown forty years before.

⁵ "*Operosa fuit non otiosa*" (Calvin).

⁶ "Faith aided in the completion of the work, and the work aided in the completion of the faith" (Lange). "His faith was *completed*, not that it had been imperfect, but that it was consummated in the exercise" (Luther).

⁷ Says *elsewhere* Gen. xv. 6 (before the sacrifice of Isaac).

⁸ Is. xli. 8. In Gen. xlv. 3, this clause seems to have occurred in some readings (Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben*, ii. 225). Abraham is still known through the East as *El Khalil Allah* ("the Friend of God"), and hence Hebron is called *El Khalil*. Dean Plumptre points out the curious fact that the title occurs *neither in the Hebrew nor in the LXX.*, and is first applied to Abraham by Philo (*De resip. Noe*, c. 11).

man is justified, and not by faith only.¹ But likewise also Rahab, the harlot,² was she not justified by works, when she received the messengers, and hastily sent them forth by another way? For even as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.”³

Leaving the theology of this remarkable passage for subsequent discussion,⁴ in order not to break the thread of the Epistle, we proceed to the next chapter.

It was natural that those who had seized a Shibboleth, of which they neither fathomed the full depth nor even rightly understood the superficial meaning, should endeavour to enforce it upon others with irate, obtrusive, and vehement dogmatism. This “itch of teaching,” this oracular egotism, is the natural result of vanity and selfishness disguising themselves under the cloak of Gospel proselytism. With all such men words take the place of works, and dogmatising contentiousness of peace and love. Therefore he warns them against being many teachers⁵—self-constituted ministers—“other peoples’ bishops”⁶—persons of that large class who assume that no incompetence is too

¹ St. Paul had adduced Abraham as a proof of justification by *faith*, not by *legalism*. St. James adduces him as an example of justification by the *works which spring from faith*, not by *orthodoxy*.

² This second example is chosen because he wishes to prove the unity of faith in Jews and Gentiles, by two examples of faith manifested by works. Abraham was a man, a Hebrew, a Prophet; Rahab a woman, a Canaanite, a harlot; yet both were justified (*i.e.*, shown to be righteous in the *moral* sense) by works which sprang from their faith (Heb. vi. 31).

³ ii. 19—26.

⁴ See *infra*, pp. 79—100.

⁵ Any authorised person might speak, either in the synagogue or the early Christian assembly (1 Cor. xiv. 26—34). The ordinary readers and preachers were not clergy at all. The eager seizure of a party watchword would be likely to lead to mere *prating*.

⁶ ἀλλοτρισεπίσκοποι (1 Pet. iv. 15).

absolute to rob them of the privilege of infallibility in laying down the law of truth for others. "My brethren, do not become many teachers,¹ being well aware that we (teachers) shall receive a severer judgment than others," since our responsibility is greater than theirs. "For in many respects we stumble, all of us."² Speech is the instrument of all teachers. If any man stumbles not in word, he is a perfect man,³ able to bridle also the whole body. Sins of speech are so common, the temptations to them are so universal, that there can be no question of the perfect wisdom and self-control of him who has acquired an absolute immunity from these. For how great is the power of the tongue! how evil its depravity, untameableness, and duplicity! It is like the little bridles which rule the horse, like the little helms that steer the great ships. It is like the spark which kindles a conflagra-

¹ Matt. xxiii. 8—10. "But be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your guide—even Christ; but all ye are brethren." "Love the work, but strive not after the honour of a teacher" (Pirke Avoth, i. 10).

² St. James would no more have thought of claiming immunity from sin than St. Paul (Phil. iii. 12) or St. John (1 John i. 8) did. When Schleiermacher condemned this passage as "bombast," he condemned the equally strong language of many great moralists of all ages. And it must be remembered that St. James was living in the Jerusalem of A.D. 60. There was not more backbiting *then* than there now is, but good men felt its evil more strongly. They did not take an interest in it, let it lie on their tables, subscribe to its dissemination. Compare the language of the Son of Sirach (xxviii. 15—26): "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue. . . . Strong cities hath it pulled down; well is he that hath not passed through the venom thereof. . . . The death thereof is an evil death; the grave were better than it. . . . Such as forsake the Lord shall fall into it; *and it shall burn in them and not be quenched*; it shall be sent unto them as a lion, and devour them as a leopard." For Jewish views, even of the Talmudists, see Schoettgen.

³ "By thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matt. xii. 37). See the great sermon on this text by Barrow.

tion in the forest.¹ Yes, the tongue—that world of injustice—is a fire. It inflames the wheel of being,² and is ever inflamed by Gehenna.³ It is the sole untameable creature—a restless mischief brimmed with deathful venom.⁴ Therewith we bless the Lord and Father, and therewith we curse the human beings who have been made after His likeness.⁵ Is this inconsistency anything short of monstrous?⁶ Is it not like a fountain bubbling out of the same fissure the bitter as well as the sweet? Can a tree produce fruits not its own?⁷ Can the salt water of a cursing tongue produce the sweet water of praise? (iii. 1—12).

¹ Both these metaphors are common in classical writers (Soph. *Antig.* 332, 475), and both occur in the hymn of Clemens of Alexandria (*Pædog. ad finem*). “Quam lenibus initiis quanta incendia oriuntur” (Sen. *Contror.* v. 5). “Ἔλῃ is here probably “a wood,” not “material.” The setting on fire of forests by sparks furnished similes even in Homer’s days (Hom. *Il.* ii. 455; xi. 115; Virg. *Georg.* ii. 303: “et totum involvit flammis nemus”); but St. James is more likely to have adopted it from Philo (*De migr. Abr.* p. 407). *μεγαλαυχεῖ* (ver. 5) occurs only in Philo.

² iii. 6., τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως (comp. Eccl. xii. 6). It is a phrase of uncertain meaning, perhaps “the orb of creation” hardly “the rolling wheel of life” (*ἀνακύκλῳ*), see Windet. *De Vita funct.*), though Anacreon uses that expression, and the Syriac here has, “it turneth the course of our generations, which run as a wheel” (comp. Sil. Ital. iii. 6, “rota volvitur ævi”).

³ Comp. Pss. lii. 2—5; exx. 3, 4; Prov. xxvi. 27: “there is as a burning fire;” (Ecclus. v. 14; xxii. 24, “As the vapour and smoke of a furnace goeth before the fire, so reviling before blood”).

⁴ Hermas, who has several references to this Epistle, says (*Pastor.* ii. 2): “Backbiting is a wicked spirit, and a restless demon” (comp. Ps. cxl. 13).

⁵ Even in fallen man, “remanet nobilitas indelebilis” (Beng.). He still retains sparks (*scintillulæ*, Confess. Belg. 14) of the heavenly fire, though “very far gone from original righteousness” (Art. ix.).

⁶ The word *χρῆ* occurs here alone in the New Testament or the LXX. The word which they use for “ought” is *δεῖ*, which expresses moral fitness. “Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner” (Ecclus. xv. 9).

⁷ Matt. vii. 16, 17. The metaphors both of this and the next verse show a marked local colouring.

These sins of the tongue among Jews and Christians sprang in great measure from the obtrusive rivalries, the contentious ambitions to which he had alluded in the first verse. Never have they been extinct. Party spirit has always been a curse and disease of every religion, even of the Christian. The formulas of Christian councils have been tagged with anathemas; *Te Deums* have been chanted at *Autos da Fé*. And because this factiousness shows an absence of true wisdom amid the pride of its imagined presence, he proceeds to contrast the false and the true wisdom. True wisdom, true understanding,¹ is shown by a course of life spent in meekness, which is the attribute of wisdom.² For a man to boast of wisdom when his heart is full of bitter emulation and party spirit is a lying vaunt. The wisdom of which he thus boasts is not, at any rate, the heavenly wisdom of the Christian, but earthly, animal,³ demon-like. The wisdom which evinces itself in party spirit leads to unhallowed chaos and every contemptible practice. "But the wisdom from above is first pure,⁴ then peace-

¹ "Who is wise (*chakam*) and intelligent (*naḥkon*) amongst you?" (Deut. i. 13; iv. 6; Eph. i. 8; Col. i. 9). The *ἐπιστημῶν* is one who understands and knows; the *σοφός* is one who carries out his knowledge into his life. "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers" (Tennyson). (Job xxviii. 12.)

² Ps. i. 16—20.

³ *ψυχικός* (see Jude 19); *ψυχικοί, πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες*. "Soulish"—i.e., sensuous—living only the natural animal life, and therefore *unspiritual*. This wisdom is earthly, because it avariciously cares for the goods of earth (Phil. iii. 19); animal, because it is under the sway of animal lusts (1 Cor. ii. 14); demon-like, because full of pride, egotism, malignity, and ambition, which are works of the devil (1 Tim. iv. 1).

⁴ "Pure," i.e., chaste, consecrated, free from admixture of carnal motives. Even out of this strong condemnation of contentious dogmatism, the universal misinterpretation of Scripture has extorted an excuse—nay, an argument—for intolerance. But the wisdom is only said to be "first pure," because "purity" describes its *inward essence*, and the other

ful, reasonable, open to persuasion, full of mercy and good fruits, without vacillation,¹ without hypocrisy. . . . But the fruit of righteousness is ever sown in peace by those who work peace" (ii. 13—18). Thus we see that with St. James, no less than with St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John, love, peace, mutual respect, mutual toleration, is the highest form of wisdom, and is a far truer sign than a contentious and bitter orthodoxy that he who has it has reached to the highest ideal of the Christian character.

But how strong are the feelings of St. James on this subject! It was a period of turmoil and contention within and without the fold.²

"Whence," he asks, "come wars, and whence fightings among you? Is it not from hence, from your pleasures that militate in

epithets its outward manifestations. "Peaceable" (Matt. v. 9), "reasonable," *i.e.*, "forbearing" (1 Tim. iii. 3), "open to persuasion" (Vulg. *suavibilis*), or perhaps "winning its way by gentleness." Seven qualities of wisdom—seven colours of the Divine rainbow—all blended into the one "Light of the world." The phrase "the wisdom from above" is common in the Talmudic writings, where it is attributed to Adam, Enoch, Solomon, etc.

¹ ἀδιάκριτος, one of St. James's frequent *hapax legomena*. It is better to interpret it by the ordinary sense of διακρίνομαι, "to doubt." The E. V. follows Luther in rendering it "without partiality." Bengel says, "Non facit discrimen ubi non opus est." Lange, "unsectarian," "not Separatist," *i.e.*, not Pharisaic. There is force in his remark that the epithet would naturally refer to social conduct, and have some relation to ἀνοπόκριτος. If so, we may render it "not partial," or "censorious." "Being ἀδιάκριτος it does not spy out moles in a brother's eye; and being ἀνοπόκριτος, it does not hide the beam in its own" (Wordsworth, who adds that "this beautiful picture of true wisdom may be placed side by side with that of charity portrayed by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii.). Comp. Eccles. i. 1—11, "All wisdom cometh from the Lord, and is with Him for ever. . . Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. The Word of God Most High is the fountain of wisdom. . . She is with all flesh, according to His gift, and He hath given her to them that love Him."

² See *infra*, Chapter xxix., on the Last Days of Jerusalem.

your members?¹ Ye desire and have not. Ye murder² and envy and are not able to obtain. Ye battle and ye war, and ye receive not because ye ask not for yourselves. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask ill for yourselves that ye may squander it in your pleasures. Adulteresses!³ know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever, then, prefers to be a friend of the world, establishes himself as an enemy of God. Or deem ye that it is vainly that the Scripture saith, "The spirit which He made to dwell in us jealously yearneth over us?"⁴ But" (because of this jealous love for us) "He giveth greater grace. Wherefore He saith God arrayeth Himself against the haughty, but giveth grace to the humble"⁵ (iv. 1-6).

i. This passage is in several respects remarkable. First, we cannot but feel surprise at such a picture as this. Wars, fightings, pleasures that are ever setting out as it were on hostile expeditions,⁶ disappointed desires, frustrate envy and even fruitless murder to supply wants which would have been granted to prayer

¹ "For in truth nothing else except the body and its desires causes wars, and seditions, and battles" (Plato, *Phædo*, p. 66, c).

² Some conjecture *φθονεῖτε*, "ye grudge;" but the reading is probably right, and *means* "ye murder," not "ye wish to kill," etc. See below.

³ *Μοιχαλίδες!* (The *μοιχοί* is omitted by *κ*, *A*, *B*). The *feminine* word is explained by the common Old Testament metaphor for idolatry (Isa. liv. 5; Jer. ii. 12; Ezek. xvi. 32). Hence in the New Testament *γενεὰ μοιχαλίδς* (Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4; 2 Cor. xi. 2); and the strange expression of 2 Pet. ii. 14, "having eyes full of an adulteress" (see note there).

⁴ See *infra*, p. 63. *πρὸς φθόνον*, not "against envy" (Luther), but the phrase seems to be adverbial, like *πρὸς βίαν*, *πρὸς ἡδονήν*, etc. *ἐπιποθεῖ* never means "lusteth," as in E.V., but expresses warm tenderness (2 Cor. ii. 9; Phil. i. 8). This seems to be the only tenable translation. I may mention one other version, which is to make *πνεῦμα* an accusative—"God yearns jealously for the spirit which He placed in us, and gives us greater grace." Yet another way (but inconsistent with the usage of the phrase *ἡ γραφή λέγει*) is to break the clause into two questions—"Do ye fancy that the Scripture speaketh vainly? Doth the Spirit, which He planted in us, lust to envy?" (I see that this is accepted by the Revised Version, with the other renderings in the margin.)

⁵ Prov. iii. 34; 1 Pet. v. 5; Clem. Rom. c. 30.

⁶ iv. 1, *σπαρτυμένον*.

—then, again, prayers utterly neglected or themselves tainted with sin because misdirected to reckless gratification of pleasure, and because ruined by contentiousness¹ and selfishness—all this spiritual adultery, the divorce of the soul from God to the love of the world—is this indeed a picture of the condition of Christian Churches within thirty years of the death of Christ? Again, I see no possible solution of the difficulty except in the twofold answer—partly that St. James is influenced by the state of things which he saw going on around him in Judæa, and partly that he is drawing no marked line of distinction between Jews and Christians in the communities which he is addressing.² And this being so, there was certainly in the Palestine of that day an ample justification for every line of the dark delineation. Alike among priests and patriots there was a fierce and luxurious greed. Strifes about the Law were loud and violent.³ Even in the days of our Lord, while the tree of Jewish nationality was still green, and not dry, as it had now become, the very Temple had been polluted into a brigands' cave.⁴ The dagger of the assassin was often secretly employed to get rid of a political opponent. A

¹ St. Peter saw no less clearly (1 Pet. iii. 7) that quarrelsomeness is fatal to prayer.

² It is a weighty remark of Lange (*ad loc.*) that "James put this Epistle into the hands of the Jewish Christians that it might influence all Jews, as it was a missionary instruction to the converted for the unconverted, and the truly converted for the half-converted."

³ St. Paul (Tit. iii. 9) applies to these the very word of St. James, "legal battles" (*μάχαι νομικαί*). There were the struggling sects of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Herodians, Samaritans, etc. Laurentius says—"Non loquitur Apostolus de bellis et caedibus, sed de mutuis dissidiis, litibus, jurgiis, et contentionibus." Doubtless of these—but of actual struggles also

⁴ *σπηλαῖον ληστῶν*, Matt. xxi. 13. Comp. Mark xv. 7; Acts xxi. 38.

bloodthirsty spirit had possessed itself of the once peaceful nation. Righteousness had once dwelt in their city, but now murderers. Men like Barabbas had become heroes of the people. Men like Theudas, and Judas, and the Epygtian impostor, were crowding the horizon of the people's life, and found no difficulty in leading after them 4,000 men or even murderers. Zealots had increased in numbers and in recklessness. Bands of robbers were the terror of every district which offered them hopes of plunder. Assassins lurked in the streets, and mingled unnoticed in the dense throngs which crowded the Temple courts at the great annual festivals.¹ Sects were arrayed in bitter envy against sects, and all were united in burning hatred against their Roman conquerors. It became in popular estimation a pious act—an act which even High Priests could hail and bless—for *sicarii* to bind themselves under a curse to waylay and massacre an enemy.² The fury of fanatical savagery assumed the guise of patriotism. False Christs and false prophets abounded and flourished, but "Stone him," and "Crucify him," and "Away with him," and "He is not fit to live," were cries into which men were ready to burst at a moment's notice against those whose thoughts had been enlightened to believe in the Son of God.

Besides all this, the world and the interests of the world assumed a complete preponderance in the thoughts of all men; the fear of God seemed to have been banished into the far background of life. Could such men pray at all? Yes, and long prayers and loud prayers in the Temple courts and at the

¹ See *Jos. B. J.* ii. 1, 23; iv. 16; vi. 31; *Antt.* xviii. 1.

² *Acts* xxiii. 12.

corners of the streets, at the very time when they were devouring widows' houses, and making their proselytes ten-times-worse children of Gehenna than themselves. There is literally no end to the anomalies of prayers. Rochester went home to pen a pious prayer in his private diary on the very day that he had been persuading his sovereign to commit an open sin. Cornish wreckers went straight from church to light their beacon-fires, and Italian brigands promise to their saints a share in the profits of their murders.¹ This "Italian piety" is the terrible state of moral apostasy against which St. James speaks with all the impassioned sternness of one of the old prophets. Like Amos, who had, no less than himself, been both a peasant and a Nazarite, he raised his indignant voice against the luxury and idolatry of the Chosen People. It is in the love of the world that he sees the source of all these enormities, and it is against this love of the world, arrayed in the golden robe of the hierarchy, and wearing "Holiness to the Lord" upon its forehead—it is against this tainted scrupulosity and mitred atheism that he speaks trumpet-tongued.

ii. But besides these remarks on the general purport of the chapter, we must notice his unidentified quotation. The English version renders it "*the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.*" The correct version, according to the best reading, is probably as I have given it, "The spirit, which He made to dwell in us, yearneth over us jealously." The meaning, then, is that the guilt of worldly unfaithfulness is enhanced because the Spirit of God, which He hath given us, longs with a jealous

¹ I lumpre, p. 89.

fondness that we should pay to God an undivided allegiance, a whole-hearted friendship; and for that reason He gives us greater grace—greater because of His yearning pity and love.¹ But where does this passage occur in Scripture? Doubtless from the library of the writers of the Old Covenant, which forms our Old Testament, we can produce analogies, more or less distinct, to the general meaning of this utterance,² but nowhere do we find the exact words. Only two solutions are therefore possible—(1) St. James may be quoting from some lost book, or some apocryphal book—like the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. The suggestion is rendered less unlikely by the references which he makes in this Epistle to other apocryphal books,³ and by the fact that his brother, St. Jude, quotes from the Book of Enoch.⁴ We must in that case understand the words *ἡ γὰρ φη* in a lower sense than that which we attribute to the Scripture. Or (2) he may be adopting the method, not unknown to the Scripture writers and to early Fathers, of concentrating the meaning of several separate passages

¹ Here, as elsewhere, I have not thought it worth while to trouble the reader with masses of "explanations," which torture out of the words the most impossible senses by the most untenable methods. Beza, Grotius, &c., make it mean "the spirit of man has a natural bias to envy," but *ἐπιπροθεῖ* cannot bear this sense, nor that given by Bede, Calvin, &c., "Is the Spirit (of God) prone to envy?" nor that of Bengel, "the Spirit lusteth against envy." There is much less objection to the view of Huther, Wiesinger, &c., "He (God) yearns jealously over the Spirit which He has placed in us, and gives greater grace" (*supra*, p. 60).

² It has been variously referred to Gen. vi. 3, 5; Num. xi. 29; Ezek. xxiii. 25; xxxvi. 27; Deut. v. 9; xxxii. 10, 11; Ps. cxix. 20; Prov. xxi. 10; Cant. viii. 6; Eccles. iv. 4; Wisd. vi. 12, 23.

³ Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. Similarly the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews makes distinct references to the Books of Maccabees (xi. 37, 38).

⁴ Jude 14.

into one terse summary.¹ In that case the word "saith" will have to be understood generically to mean, "Is not this the sense of Scripture?" If we adopt this solution, we must suppose that the passages alluded to are such as Gen. vi. 3, "My spirit shall not always strive with men;" or Deut. xxxii. 11, where God describes His love for Israel under the image of an eagle covering her young in the nest, and bearing them on her wings, and where in the Septuagint this very verb *epipothei*, or "yearns over," occurs; or, again, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will put My spirit within you." The difficulty cannot yet be considered to have been removed, but other methods of solving it are far less probable than the two to which I have here referred.

iii. Having thus shown their dangerous condition, he urges them, with strong exhortation, which reminds us of the tone of Joel, to submission, moral effort, resistance of the devil,² the earnest seeking of God, and deep humiliation of soul,³ which might lead God to interfere on their behalf.

iv. Then, with a repetition of the word "brethren," which shows that his rebukes are being uttered in the spirit of love, he warns them once more against evil-speaking as a sin which is adverse to the humility

¹ We find similar condensed quotations in John vii. 33, 42; Matt. ii. 23; and perhaps Eph. v. 14. Dean Plumptre quotes from Clemens Romanus (c. 46) the curious passage, "It has been written, 'Cleave to the saints, for they who cleave to them shall be sanctified.'"

² This is one of the few places in the New Testament where *διάβολος* occurs. "The devil," says Hermas (*Past.* ii. 12), "can wrestle with us, but cannot throw us; if, then, thou resist him, he will be conquered, and flee from thee utterly ashamed." (Matt. iv. 1-11.)

³ He uses the striking word *κατήφεια*—"downcastness of face"—which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. He is thinking of the outward manifestations as the signs of the inward humiliation.

which he has been urging on them, since it rises from an imaginary superiority. It arrogantly usurps the functions of God, who is the one true Judge, because He alone stands above the Law on the behests of which we are not capable of passing any final judgment.¹

v. Passing to another sin, he strongly condemns the braggart self-confidence² and sensual security with which, like the Rich Fool in the Parable, men make gainful plans for the future without any reference to God, or to His provident ordering of our lives, or to the fact that life itself is—or rather that *they* themselves are—but as a fleeting mist.³ They *knew* in their hearts that they ought not to speak thus. If they thought for a moment their consciences would condemn them for thus ignoring all reference to God, and this was a plain proof that it was sin⁴ (iv. 13—17).

¹ "Nostrum non est judicare, praesertim cum exsequi non possumus" (Bengel). "To offer to domineer over the conscience," says the Emperor Maximilian, "is to assault the citadel of heaven."

² iv. 16. ἀλαζόνεια only in 1 John ii. 16: "Ye boast in your vain-glorious presumptions."

³ Job vii. 7; Ps. cii. 3; Wisd. v. 9—14. The best reading is ἀραιὸς γάρ ἐστε, "for ye are a vapour," B. and the Syriac and Æthiopic versions (and practically A. K., for ἐσται must be due to itacism). "Pulvis et umbra sumus" (Hor.). But St. James turns the transitoriness of life to an opposite lesson from that of the Epicureans (Hor. Od. 1, 9; 1 Cor. xv. 32).

⁴ "There shall no harm happen unto me" (Ps. x. 6); "I shall die in my nest" (Job xxix. 18). For a Jew to talk thus, as if there were no God, or as though He took no part in the concerns of life, was to run counter to the central thought of their whole dispensation. A sense of God's nearness was the one thing which more than all others separated the Jews from other races as a chosen people. To abnegate this conviction in common talk was to show a practical apostasy. The Rabbinites also felt this. In *Debharim Rabba*, § 9, a father at his son's circumcision produces wine seven years old, and says, "With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son." That night Rabbi Simeon meets the Angel of Death, and asks him "why he is wandering about." "Because," said Arael, "I slay those who say, We will do this or that, and think not

• vi. Then in language full of prophetic imagery and prophetic fire, meant to terrify men into thoughts of repentance, but not by any means as Calvin too characteristically said, *absque spe veniæ*—"apart from hope of pardon"—he bursts into terrible denunciation of the rich, which shows how much his thoughts had dwelt upon their arrogant rapacity.

"Go to now, ye rich, weep, howling¹ over your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are rotted, and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver is rusted through and through,² and the rust of them shall be for a witness to you,³ and shall eat your flesh⁴ as fire. Ye treasured up in the last days,⁵ So the pay of your labourers, who reaped your fields, the pay kept back by fraud, cries aloud from you,⁶ and the cries of the reapers

how soon death may overtake them. The man who said he would drink that wine often shall die in thirty days." From this verse, and from 1 Cor. iv. 19, "I will come quickly to you, *if God will*," has come the common phrase, "*Deo volente*."

¹ Only in Isa. xiii. 6; xiv. 31; xv. 3; xxxiii.; Ezek. xxxvii. The language must be judged from the standpoint of prophetic analogies in Isaiah, Amos, &c., and also in Matt. xxiii.; Rev. xviii. And the warnings, like all God's warnings, are hypothetical (Jonah iii. 10; Jer. xviii. 7-10).

² v. 2. The perfects are *prophetic* perfects; they express absolute certainty as to the ultimate result. *Karlorai* is another *hapax legomenon* (except Ecclus. xii. 11), as are *σέσηπεν* (Ecclus. xiv. 19) and *σηρόβρωτα* in this verse. Gold and silver do not *rust*, but the expression is perfectly intelligible (Isa. i. 22, "Thy silver has become dross").

³ "In their tarnish and consumption you may see a picture of what will come on you." "Magna vanitas! thesaurisat moriturus morituris" (Aug.).

⁴ τὰς σάρκας (plur.) has been taken to mean "your bloated bodies," &c., but occurs in Lev. xxvi. 29, &c.

⁵ There was much worldly prosperity and ostentatious legalism at this epoch. Some take ὡς πῦρ after ἐθησαυρίσατε—"your treasury of gold is in reality a treasury of fire."

⁶ "From you," i.e., from your hands or treasures. Ecclus. xxxiv. 22, "He that taketh away his neighbour's living *slayeth* him, and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a blood-shedder" (comp. Gen. iv. 10; Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Jer. xxii. 13; Mal. iii. 5). The rendering of the E. V., "kept back by you," is also tenable. The tract Succah

have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.¹ Ye luxuriated on the earth and waxed wanton, ye fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.² Ye condemned, ye killed the just man. He doth not resist you³ (v. 1—6).

“Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.⁴ So the husbandman awaiteth the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until he receive the early and latter rain.⁵ Be patient then, ye also, stablish your hearts because the coming of the Lord is near” (v. 7, 8).

vii. Here again we ask, Of whom is the Prophet thinking? Were there indeed, in those early days of Christianity, any—still more, could there have been *many*—who correspond to this picture of voluptuous and fraudulent wantonness, which had forgotten God and was so cruel and false to men? Surely St. Paul gives us the answer when he says, “Consider your calling, brethren. Not many of you are wise after the flesh; not many mighty, not many noble”⁶—and therefore certainly not many rich—“are called.” In those early congregations of slaves and sufferers there was little to attract, there was everything to repel, the ordinary

(f. 29, b) gives four reasons why the avaricious lose their goods, which are (1) *because they keep back the pay of their labourers*; (2) *because they neglect their welfare*; (3) *because they shift burdens upon them*; (4) *because of pride*.

¹ The form of expression (used by no other New Testament writer, except in a quotation, Rom. ix. 29) is characteristically Judaic. The LXX. rendering is mostly *παιροκατὰρ*. See Bp. Pearson *On the Creed*, Art. I.

² Like cattle grazing in rich pastures on the day that they are doomed to bleed (Theile); Ezek. xxxiv. 1—10.

³ Hos. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 24; Isa. liii. 7. This makes the conclusion of the clause far more striking than the proposed renderings, “Does he not set himself in array against you?” or “bring the armies against you?”

⁴ This must be a reference to *Christ's* coming.

⁵ The former in winter, the latter in spring (Deut. xi. 14; Jer. iii. 3; v. 24; Joel ii. 23).

⁶ 1 Cor. i. 26.

multitude of the wealthy. In those days the truth of the Lord's words was seen, "How hardly shall they that have riches—how hardly shall they who trust in riches—enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The "deceitfulness of riches" became very manifest, and the "woe unto you that are rich" was seen in its full meaning. Rich men, indeed, there were in the Church, as there had been since Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea brought their costly spices to the tomb; for St. Paul in one of his latest Epistles could give a charge to the rich not to be arrogant, and not to trust in the uncertainty of riches.¹ But considering what a Christian had in those days to suffer, is it conceivable that any of the few rich men who had ventured to bear the reproach of the cross would have lived the haughty, greedy, oppressive life of the men on whom St. James here hurls his unsparing denunciation? So strongly has this difficulty been felt that some, once more, see in "the rich" only a symbol of the proud, haughty, exclusive, self-satisfied religionist;² but though the words "rich" and "poor" may not be confined to their literal senses—yet certainly the literal sense is not excluded. Once more, I see the explanation of his passion, the moving cause of his righteous menaces, in the conduct of the leading classes at Jerusalem—the gorgeously clad Herodians, the aristocratic Sadducees. The extracts from the Talmudists which I have given on a previous page describe their conduct, and will show what bitter need there was for the language which St. James employs.

¹ 1 Tim. v. 17.

² Comp. Rev. ii. 9; iii. 17; and see 1 Sam. ii. 8; Ps. lxxii. 13; Amos ii. 6; Luke i. 52, 53; vi. 20, &c.

Nor is Josephus less emphatic.

"About this time," he says, "King Agrippa gave the high priesthood to Ishmael Ben Phabi. And now arose a sedition on the part of the chief priests against the priests and the leaders of the multitude at Jerusalem. Each of them gathered around himself a company of the boldest innovators and became their leader. And when they came into collision they both abused each other and flung stones. There was no one to keep them in awe, but all these things went on with a high hand as though in a city where there was anarchy. And such impudence and audacity seized the chief priests that they even dared to send slaves to the threshing-floors to seize the tithes due to the priests. And it happened that some of the priests died of want from being deprived of their sustenance, so completely did the violence of the seditious prevail over all justice."¹

viii. And if these words of St. James were addressed to Jews and Jewish Christians about the year A.D. 61, how speedily were his warnings fulfilled, how terribly and how soon did the retributive doom fall on these wealthy, luxurious tyrants! A few years later Vespasian invaded Judæa. Truly there was need to howl and weep when, amid the horrors caused by the rapid approach of the Roman armies, the gold and silver of the wealthy oppressors was useless to buy bread, and they had to lay up, for the moth to eat, those gorgeous robes which it would have been a peril and a mockery to wear. The worshippers at the last fatal Passover became the victims. The rich only were marked out for the

¹ *Jos. Antt.* xv. 8, § 8. He repeats the same complaints against Joshua, son of Gamala, in xx. 9, § 2.

worst fury of the Zealots, and their wealth sank into the flames of the burning city. Useless were their treasures in those "last days," when there was heard at the very doors the thundering summons of the Judge! In all their rich banquets and full-fed reveling they had but fattened themselves as human offerings for that day of slaughter! The Jewish historian here becomes the best commentator on the prophecies of the Christian Apostle.

ix. "*Ye condemned, ye murdered the just.*" The aorist tenses of the original may point equally well to some single act, or to a series of single acts; and "the just man" was a title of every devout and faithful Israelite. The present tense, "he doth not resist you"—so abruptly and pathetically introduced—seems to show that St. James is alluding to a general state of things. In the delivery of Christ to the Gentiles the Jewish Church had slain "that Just One;"¹ and since His death they had consented to the murder of His saints in the stoning of Stephen, and the beheading of James, the son of Zebedee. But in the scantiness of the records of the early Church of Jerusalem there is too much reason to fear that there was a crowd of obscurer martyrs.² And Christ suffered, as it were, again in the person of His saints. When they were murdered He was, as it were, led once more to unresisted sacrifice. And now St. James himself bore pre-eminently the title of "the Just." His words might seem to have been prophetic of his own rapidly-approaching fate, while yet they tacitly repudiate the title by which he was called, to

¹ Acts vii. 52.

² Acts xxvi. 10. "When they were condemned to death," says St Paul, "I gave my voice against them."

confer it on Him who alone is worthy of it. But the state of things which he is describing was by no means isolated. It had been already described at length in the language of a book which also belonged to this epoch, and with which St. James has more than once shown himself to be familiar.

"For the ungodly said . . . Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us; let none of us go without his portion of our voluptuousness - *let us oppress the poor righteous man* . . . for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Let us lie in wait for the righteous. He professeth to have the knowledge of God, and he calleth himself the child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits. He pronounceth the *end of the just* to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father. Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, *that we may know his meekness and prove his patience*. Let us condemn him with a shameful death, for by his own saying he shall be respected" (Wisd. ii. 6—20).

x. But all such warnings proved vain. Nay, it is probable that they only precipitated the fate of the speaker, and that he, like other prophets, felt the vengeance of those whose unrepented sins he so unsparingly denounced.¹ When the priests had murdered James the Just, not resisting them, but praying for them, the day for warning had passed away for ever, and over a guilty city and a guilty nation History pronounced once more her awful verdict of "Too late."

"Ye condemned, ye murdered the just. *He resisteth you not.*"² "And thus," says Wiesinger, "we

¹ Hegesippus, *ap. Euseb.* ii. 23, Origen, *c. Cels.* i. 48; Jer. *De Virr. Illustr.* ii.

² Comp Amos v. 12: "They afflict the just . . . therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time."

have, as it were, standing before us the slain and unresisting righteous man, when, lo! the curtain falls. Be patient, brethren, wait!” The coming of the Lord for which they had to wait was not far distant. The husbandman had to wait in patience, and often in disappointment, for the early and latter rain. Let them learn by his example. But since the Judge was standing already before the doors,¹ let them, that they might escape His condemnation, not only bear with patience the afflictions of persecutors, but also abstain from murmuring at each other’s conduct.² It was patience that they needed most; patience with one another, patience under external trials. As an example of that patience, let them take the prophets, and let the Book of Job³ remind them that in the end God ever vindicates His attributes of compassionate tenderness.⁴

xi. His task is now done, but he adds a few needful admonitions. Let them avoid all rash and needless oaths, and be simple in their affirmations.⁵ Let them be more fervent in prayer.

¹ Some have fancied that the question tauntingly asked of St. James in the story of his martyrdom in Hegesippus—“Which is the *door* of Jesus?”—had reference to this saying of his; as though they would ask, “By *which* door will Christ come to judge?”; but it more probably refers to John x. 7—9 (see Gieseler, *Ch. Hist.* § 31).

² A clear reference to Matt. vii. 1 (μὴ στενάζετε κατ’ ἀλλήλων): lit., “groan not against one another.” The E. V. “grudge,” once meant “murmur” (see Ps. lix. 15); “he eats his meat without grudging” (Shakesp. *Much Ado*, iii. 4, 90).

³ Here alone referred to in the New Testament, though quoted in 1 Cor. iii. 19, and by Philo, *De Mutat. Nom.* xxiv.

⁴ v. 9—11. Others interpret “Ye have seen the end of the Lord,” to mean, “Ye saw the death of Christ,” as in 1 Pet. ii. 22—25; *πολύσπλαγχνος* is yet another unique expression for *εὐσπλαγχνος* (Eph. iv. 32; 1 Pet. iii. 8). *οἰκτίρων* occurs in Ecclus. ii. 13; Luke vi. 36.

⁵ Comp. Matt. v. 35, 36. Jews (unlike Christians, alas!) were not likely to take God’s name in vain. “That ye fall not into judgment”; the reading *εἰς ὑπόκρισιν*, gives a worse sense, and is not well supported.

"Is any one among you in affliction? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is any sick among you? Let him summon the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil¹ in the name of the Lord,² and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him (from his bed of sickness, Acts ix. 34).³ Even if he shall have committed sin, it shall be remitted him. Confess then to one another⁴ your transgressions, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.⁵ Much availeth the supplication of a just man, when it worketh with energy. Elias was a man of like passions with us,⁶ and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not upon the earth three years and six months.⁷ And again he prayed, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."⁸

¹ A common Eastern therapeutic, as we see from Isa. i. 6; Mark vi. 13; Luke x. 34; Jos. B. J. i. 33, § 5; *Anth.* xvii. 6, § 5. It was also used by Romans (Pliny, *H. N.* xxxi. 47). The use of oil for bodily healing is retained by the Eastern Church.

² That is, of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts ii. 38; iii. 16; iv. 10; 1 Cor. i. 13-15).

³ "Nisi nempe aliter ei suppeditat ad aeternam salutem" (Grotius). In the first Prayer-book of Edward VI. the anointing was accompanied by the prayer: "Our Heavenly Father vouchsafe for His great mercy (*if it be His blessed will*) to restore to thee thy bodily health." The prayer will not be thrown away; it will be answered as is best for us and the sufferer. How much connexion this has with Extreme Unction (of which with an anathema the Council of Trent commanded it to be understood) *may* be seen from the fact that extreme unction is forbidden, except in cases in which recovery seems quite hopeless.

⁴ In the manipulation of this text by Cornelius à Lapide, "to one another" becomes "to a priest" ("frater fratri confitemini, *pnta sacerdoti*"). Confession in sickness is also enjoined in the Talmud (Shabbath, f. 32, a).

⁵ "When Rabba fell sick he bade his family publish it abroad, that they who hated him might rejoice, and that they who loved him might intercede with God for him" (Nedarim, f. 40, a). "The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the Word of God and prayer" (Sopher Ha Chayim).

⁶ Acts xiv. 15.

⁷ Luke iv. 25. This period (42 months, 1,260 days—comp. Rev. xi. 3) was mentioned by the Jewish tradition (Yalkut Simeoni), and is perfectly consistent with fair inferences from 1 Kings xviii.

⁸ v. 13-18. Thus the prayer of Elijah was one of mercy as well as one of judgment. Dean Plumptre thinks that St. James may have had in

The leading idea of this passage, which Lange most needlessly allegorises, is the efficacy of Christian prayer. The course which St. James recommends in cases of sickness is natural and beautiful, and in the small numbers of the Christian communities could be easily followed. It is the advice of which the entire spirit is carried out in our service for the Visitation of the Sick. We no longer, indeed, anoint with oil, because we do not live in Palestine or in the first century.¹ The therapeutic means of one climate and age are not necessarily the best to be adopted in another, but prayer belongs to all countries and all times, and the mutual confession of sins is often helpful. We must always distinguish between the letter and the spirit, the accidental adjunct and the eternal principle. If this passage has been perverted into the doctrine and practice of extreme unction regarded as a sacrament,² and of sacramental confession to a priest, it has only shared the fate of hundreds of other passages. There are few prominent texts on which the tottering structures of purely inferential

mind the sudden burst of rain after drought which fell in answer to prayer after the troubles caused by the attempt of Caligula to set up his statue in the Temple (Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 8, § 6). Analogous to this is the story of the Thundering Legion (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 5; Tert. *Apol.* 5), and the well-known story of Mr. Grimshaw. Hegesippus says of James himself, that it was supposed by the people that he caused rain to fall by his prayers.

¹ "Things which were practised and prescribed by Christ Himself and His Apostles are not of perpetual obligation unless they are conducive to an end which is of perpetual necessity."—Bp. Wordsworth, who instances feet-washing (John xiii. 14) and the Kiss of Peace (1 Thess. v. 26; 1 Pet. v. 14).

² Anointing with oil was provided for in the first Prayer-book of Edward VI., "if the sick man desire it"; but as no *miraculous* results can follow, and as oil is not specially valuable in our climate as a means of healing in *all* diseases, it was wisely dropped in the Prayer-book of 1552 (see Jer. Taylor's Preface to *Holy Dying*).

dogmas have not been reared. Thus do men build upon Divine foundations the hay and stubble of human fancies. And if the passage has thus been perverted in one direction by the growth of sacerdotalism, it has been perverted in another by the fanaticism of ignorance. Because the promises of healing given by St. James are unconditional, it has been assumed by some poor fanatics that no one need ever die, as though death, in God's good time, were not man's richest birthright, and as though every good man's prayer for any earthly blessing was not in itself made absolutely conditional on the will of God.¹ But neither for extreme unction, nor for sacramental confession, nor for sacerdotal absolution,² nor for fanatical extravagance, does this passage afford the slightest sanction. Such inferences are only possible to the exegesis which takes the sound of the words, and not their true meanings. The lessons which we must here learn are lessons of the blessedness of sympathy, and of holy intercourse, and of the humble confession of sin, and, above all, of prayer, at *all* times, but most of all in times of sickness. Our faith, too, may find encouragement in the efficacy of prayer for the achievement of results which even transcend the ordinary course of nature. In enforcing this faith by the example of Elijah,³ St. James does so on the express ground that, saint though he was, and prophet though

¹ Œcumenius, on the other hand, has no warrant for confining the reference of the verse to miraculous healings in the days of the Apostles (the *χάρισμα ἰαμάτων*, 1 Cor. xii. 9).

² Even Cardinal Cajetan admits, with perfect frankness: "*Hæc verba non loquuntur de Sacramentali Uctione extremæ unctionis—nec hic est sermo de confessione sacramentali.*"

³ It is implied in 1 Kings xviii. 42, *seq.*, that Elijah prayed for rain. It was the Jewish tradition that he also prayed for the drought, but Scripture does not say so. He announced it (1 Kings xvii. 1).

he was, he was no supernatural being, but one "of like passions" with ourselves.

xii. Then, in one last weighty word, comes the solemn close of the Epistle.

"My brethren, if any one among you wander from the truth, and one convert him, know that he who has converted a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (v. 19, 20).

He has spoken many words of warning and condemnation against the worldliness, the violence, the forgetfulness of God, which were but too prevalent among Jewish and Christian communities, and he has given many an exhortation to patience, and dehortation from iniquity. But this last word is a word to those who were most faithful, and is meant to stimulate them to the best and most blessed of all duties—the endeavour to help and save the souls of others. No reward could equal that of success in such a task.¹ To hide as with the gracious veil of penitence and forgiveness the many sins of a sinner was a Christ-like service, and he who was enabled to render it would share in the joy of Christ. And may not the thought be at least involved that in covering the sins of another he would also be helping to cover his own—that he who waters others shall be watered also himself?²

¹ Ps. xxxii. 1, 2; lxxxv. 2; Neh. iv. 5; Prov. x. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 8. "He commends the correction of brothers from its *result*, that we may more eagerly devote ourselves to it" (Calvin). A faint analogy occurs in Yoma, f. 87 a. "Whoever leads many to righteousness, sin is not committed by his hands."

² "Whosoever destroyeth one soul of Israel, Scripture counts it to him as though he had destroyed the whole world; and whoso preserveth one soul of Israel, Scripture counts it as though he had preserved the whole world" (Sanhedrin, f. 37, a). R. Meyer said—"Great is repentance, because for the sake of one that truly repenteth, the whole world is

And there, as with a seal affixed to a testament,¹ he ends. He would leave that thought last in their minds, and would suffer neither greetings nor messages to weaken the force of the injunction, or the supremacy of the blessing by which he would encourage them to its fulfilment. “*Insigni doctrinâ, velut colophone epistolam absolvit.*”²

pardoned (Hos. xiv. 4)” (Yoma, f. 86, b). How much wiser and more controlled is the language of St. James!

¹ Herder.

² Zuinglius.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ST. JAMES AND ST. PAUL ON FAITH AND WORKS.

“Thy works and alms and all thy good endeavour
Staid not behind, nor in the grave were trod ;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.”—MILTON.

Our sketch of the Epistle of St. James cannot conclude without a few words on the famous passage in which, it has been supposed, the Bishop of Jerusalem deliberately contravenes and argues against the most characteristic formula of the Apostle of the Gentiles.¹

Let us first place side by side the passages which are in most direct apparent contradiction :

<p>“ . . . if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God ” (Rom. iv. 2).</p>	<p>“ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar ? ” (Jas. ii. 21).</p>
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<p>“ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ” (Rom. v. 1).</p>	<p>“ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works ? Can the faith save him ? ” (Jas. ii. 14).</p>
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<p>“ By grace are ye saved thro’ faith . . . not of works, lest any man should boast ” (Eph. ii. 8, 9).</p>	<p>“ . . . Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone ” (Jas. ii. 17).</p>
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<p>“ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law ” (Rom. iii. 28).</p>	<p>“ Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only ” (Jas. ii. 24).</p>
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¹ I have consulted the treatment of this subject by Luther, Bengel, Jer. Taylor (Sermon iii. “ *Fides formata* ”), Barrow (Sermon on Justify-

It is hardly strange that the opposite character of these statements should have attracted deep attention, and of late years there have been two distinct views respecting them.

(1.) One is that the passages involve a real and even intentional contradiction.¹ Baur, while holding that St. James meant to oppose the formulæ of St. Paul, or of his School, yet speaks with moderation. He believes that St. James's arguments were not so much meant to be polemical as corrective of misapprehensions, and therefore that they were dictated by the true spirit of catholic unity. Others, however, and notably the advanced members of the Tübingen School, regard the Epistle as a bitter manifesto of Judaizing Christians against the Paulinists.² The research and insight of Baur led him to a real discovery when he pointed out the importance of the contest between the Judaizers and the Paulinists. Those who pushed his views to an extreme were prepared to sacrifice the entire historical credibility of the Acts of the Apostles in order to make out that St. James and St. Paul, or at least their immediate followers, hated each other with irreconcilable opposition. They thought, in fact, that in the Clementine Homilies, with their strong animus against St. Paul, they had discovered the true key to the early history of the Church. They attributed

ing Faith), De Wette (whose note is quoted in Alford, *ad loc.*), Haro (*Vindication of Luther*), Bishop Lightfoot, Plumptre, Dean Bagot, Wordsworth, Ewald, Lange, Pfleiderer, Baur, Wiesinger, Huther, Schaff, Reuss, Immer (*N. T. L. Theol.*), Neander, and other writers.

¹ Luther, Cyril Lucar, Ströbel, Kern, Baur, Schwegler, Renan.

² The notion that Jas. iii. 13-18, and the praise of the wisdom which is "earthly, unspiritual, demonish," is a reflection on 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15 (Hilgenfeld, *Eindeut.* 536) is very baseless.

to the Apostles themselves heretical slanders which they would have rejected with astonished indignation. They think that three of the Apostles—St. James, St. John, and St. Jude—were Judaists, who not only took an impassioned part in the controversies which were excited by the actions of St. Paul, but have even recorded their abhorrence of his views upon the Sacred page. In their opinion, it is St. Paul at whom St. James is aiming one of the bitterest terms of Hebrew condemnation when he exclaims, “But art thou willing to recognise, *O empty person*,¹ that faith without works is dead?” The Epistle of St. Jude becomes, in their view, a specimen of the “hatred-breathing Epistles” which were despatched to the Jewish Churches by the heads of the Mother Church in Jerusalem, to teach Christians not only to repudiate, but to denounce the special “Gospel” of the Apostle of the Gentiles. According to their interpretation, St. John, the Apostle of Love, hurled forth against his great fellow-Apostle yet fiercer execration, and, in “cries of passionate hatred,” described him as a False Apostle, a Balaam, a Jezebel, the founder of the Nicolaitans, and a teacher of crime and heresy. They, therefore, regard the addresses of the Apocalypse to the Seven Churches as manifestoes directed by a Judaist against the very Apostle by whose heroic labours those Churches had been founded.² The falsehood of this hypothesis has long been demonstrated. It only furnishes an illustration of the ease with which a theory, resting on a narrow basis of fact, may be pushed into complete extravagance. That St. Paul and St. James approached the great truths of Christi-

¹ רָקָא, Raca.

² Renan, *St. Paul*, p. 367.

anity from different points of view; that they did not adopt the same phrases in describing them; that they differed about various questions of theory and practice; even that they stood at the head of parties whose mutual bitterness they would have been the first to deplore—is clear from the Acts of the Apostles, and still more clear from scattered notices in the Epistles of St. Paul. But it is quite common for the adherents of great thinkers to exaggerate their differences, and fail to catch their spirit. Whatever may have been the tone of the Jerusalem Pharisees towards Gentile Christians who paid no regard to the ceremonial Law, we have the evidence of St. Paul himself,¹ as well as of public records of the Church, that between him and the other Apostles there reigned a spirit of mutual respect and mutual concession. The view, therefore, that St. James was trying, in the approved modern fashion, to “write down” St. Paul, may be finally dismissed.

(2.) The other view, which has recently been maintained by Bishop Lightfoot,² is that St. James is not thinking of St. Paul in any way; that his expressions have no reference to him whatever; and that he is only occupied with controversies which moved in an entirely different world of ideas. Now it is, I think, sufficiently proved that this view is *possible*. Evidence has been adduced to show that the question of faith and works was one which had been long and eagerly debated in the Jewish Schools, and that the names of Abraham, and even of Rahab,³ as forming two marked contrasts, had

¹ Gal. ii. 9; Acts xv. 13–21; xxi. 17–25.

² *Galatians*, pp. 152–162. This is the view of Schneckenburger, Theile, Neander, Schaff, Theisch, Hofmann, Huther, Lange, Plumptre.

³ That Rahab was prominent in Jewish thought we see from Matt. i. 5.

constantly been introduced into these discussions. It is not, therefore, true to say that St. James *must* be thinking of St. Paul. The "solifidianism" of the Jews consisted in an exclusive trust in their Monotheism, their descent from Abraham, their circumcision, and their possession of the Law.¹ Justin Martyr alludes to Jews who, "although they were sinners, yet deceived themselves by saying that, if they knew God, He would not impute sin to them."² If, then, the early date of the Epistle could be otherwise demonstrated, the question as to any designed opposition between the two Apostles would fall to the ground, and we should only have to show whether it is possible to reconcile independent statements which at first appear to be mutually exclusive. It is so important to establish this fact—so important to prove that whatever be the date of the Epistle, St. James *may* be refuting the notion of a justification by faith which is not that described by St. Paul, but a blind Judaic trust in privileges and observances—that it will be worth while to show from the Talmud how prevalent these views were in the Jewish world.

a. Thus, as regards *Monotheism*, we find that in repeating the Shemâ, or daily prayer, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God" (Deut. vi. 4); "whosoever prolongs the utterance of the word One (*echad*) shall have his days and years prolonged to him" (Berachoth, f. 13, b).

When Akhiva was martyred by having his flesh torn from him, he died uttering this word "One;" and then came a Bath Kol, which said, "Blessed art thou, Rabbi

¹ Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33; Rom. ii. 17–20, and compare Jer. vii. 4.

² Just. Mart. *Dial.* § 141.

Akhiva, for thy soul and the word One left thy body together" (id. f. 61, *b*).

β. Again, as regards *circumcision* :

"Though Abraham kept all the commandments, including the whole ceremonial law (Kiddushin, f. 82, *a*), still he was not *perfect* till he was circumcised" (Nedarim, f. 31, *b*).

"So great is circumcision, that thirteen covenants were made concerning it" (Nedarim, f. 31, *b*).

Many Jews relied less on their observances than on their possession of special privileges.

γ. As regards their *national position*, they said that God had given to Israel three precious gifts—the Law, the land of Israel, and the world to come;¹ that all Israelites were princes,² all holy,³ all philosophers, "full of meritorious works as a pomegranate of pips,"⁴ and that it was as impossible for the world to be without them as to be without air.⁵ They even ventured to say that "All Israelites have a portion in the world to come, as it is written, And thy people are all righteous, they shall inherit the land" (Is. lx. 21). (Sanhedrin, f. 90, *a*.)

"The world was created only for Israel: none are called the children of God but Israel: none are beloved before God but Israel" (Gerim, 1).

δ. In fact, on the testimony of the Talmud itself, *externalism* had triumphed in the heart of the Jewish Church. The High Priests, though they were, according to the best Jewish testimony, shameful examples of greed, simony, luxury, gluttony, pride, and violence, were yet quite content with themselves if they were

¹ Berachoth, f. 5, *a*.

² Shal-bath, f. 57, *a*.

³ Shabbath, f. 86, *a*.

⁴ The Ma-hisor for Pentecost.

⁵ Taanith, f. 3, *b*.

rigorists in the minutiae of Levitism instead of examples of ideal righteousness. In the tract Sota (47, *b*) there is a bitter complaint that moral worth was disregarded, and no regard paid to anything but external service. In another tract (Yoma, 23, *a*) we are told that outward observance was more highly esteemed than inward purity, and that murder itself was considered venial in comparison with a ceremonial defilement of the Temple.¹ St. James was daily familiar with this spectacle of men who, living in defiance of every moral law, yet thought to win salvation by the easy mechanism of ceremonial scrupulosity. Against such mechanical conceptions of holiness his Epistle would have told with great power.

(3.) But believing as I do, on other grounds, that the Epistle was written shortly before St. James's death, it becomes difficult to suppose that St. James's argument in favour of "justification by works" bears *no relation whatever* to the great argumentative Epistles in which St. Paul had established the truth of Justification by Faith. And while I freely concede that the question of faith and works was frequently discussed in the Jewish Schools, and with special reference to the life of Abraham, there is not, I think, sufficient evidence that the doctrine had ever been so distinctly formulated, and certainly it had never been so fully and powerfully discussed, as it was in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians.² If we are right in supposing that St. James wrote his Epistle about

¹ For the various Talmudic quotations see Grätz, iii. 321, 322, and the works of Schöttgen, Meuschen, Eisenmenger, Hersheon, Hamburger, &c. No less than fourteen of the Treatises of the Talmud, both Mishna and Gemara, have now been translated into French by Moïse Schwab.

² "Und sicher kann man nicht leugnen dass die vom Apostel Paulus

the year 61 or 62, then some years had elapsed since St. Paul had sent forth these great Epistles. Considering that emissaries, who came from Jerusalem—who came ostensibly from James—who boasted, though not always truly, of his sanction and authority—who carried with them letters which, if not written by him, were written by leading personages in the Church of which he was the Bishop—had penetrated into many of the communities founded by St. Paul, and had half-undone his work by reducing his converts to the legal bondage from which he had set them free—it becomes almost inconceivable that St. James, even if he had not seen copies of one or other of those Epistles, should not at least have been familiar with the general drift of views which had become notorious wherever the name of Christ was preached. Now, the teaching of St. Paul was intensely original. It was not easy for any one to grasp its full meaning; and it was quite impossible for any hostile and prejudiced person to understand it at all. To many, educated in the absorbing prejudices of Judaism, his opinions about the Law would have appeared dubious. Their indignation would have been kindled by the fiery and almost contemptuous boldness of some of the expressions which he wrote and published, and which he must therefore have frequently let fall in the heat of controversy. In the Church of Jerusalem it is hardly likely that the dialectics of St. Paul were lovingly or patiently studied. St. James himself is our witness to the fact that there, and throughout the Ghettos of the world, the views of the great missionary were systematically

aufgestellte Lehre über dem Glauben zu dieser Abhandlung die nächste Veranlassung gab" (Ewald, *Die Sendschreiben*, ii. p. 198).

misrepresented. To the ordinary Jewish Christian he was known as one who constantly taught "*apostasy from Moses*," as one who "*forbad*" not only Gentiles, but "all Jews," to circumcise their children, and "to walk according to the customs."¹ As regards Jews, the charge was false. St. Paul never interfered with them; and since he himself kept the general provisions of the Law as a national duty—greatly as, to him, they must have lost their significance—we have every reason to suppose that he would have advised any Jew who consulted him to do the same. But any lie, however often refuted, is good enough for party-spirit; and no amount of explanation, however simple and sincere, will prevent the grossest misrepresentations of opinion from being used for their own purposes by religious partisans. Further than this, it is not only possible, but probable, that some of St. Paul's followers *did* misinterpret his characteristic expressions, did make a bad and even dangerous use of them. We might easily imagine that this would be the case, because every day shows us how easy it is, first to turn any expression into a watchery, then to empty it of all significance, and finally to use it in a sense entirely alien from that in which it was originally used. Here again we are not left to conjecture. We have the express testimony of the second Epistle of St. Peter that there were those who wrested the difficult parts of St. Paul's Epistles, as they did also the rest of the Scriptures, *to their own perdition*. Now, if it be merely snatched up as a formula—without an earnest desire to understand it, without the thought which was necessary to see it in its proper perspective—there is no expression more liable

¹ Acts xxi. 21.

to be perverted than St. Paul's characteristic formula of "Justification by Faith." In his sense of the words it is one of the deepest and most essential truths of Christianity; but in his sense only. And he had used both words, "Justification" and "Faith," in meanings which made them parts of one great system of thoughts. It is owing to this that his words have been constantly misunderstood, and are to this day deplorably misinterpreted. To this day there are some who use expressions so objectionable as "works are deadly." There were even in the days of the Apostles, as there have been since, Nicolaitans and other Antinomians, who, on the claim of possessing faith, have set themselves in superiority to the moral law, and asserted a licence to commit all ungodliness. Now, if St. James had come across such men, or had been told of their existence, or had even met with Jewish Christians who, without understanding St. Paul's teaching, were perplexed by the ignorant repetition of the formula which was selected to represent it, would there have been anything derogatory to the character of St. James, or unworthy of his position, in the endeavour to refute the perversions to which this formula was liable? Is it not a high service to expose the empty use of any expression which has been degraded to the purposes of cant and faction? Would not St. Paul have rejoiced that such a task should have been performed? Would he not have performed it himself, if circumstances had led him to see that it was needful? It is, indeed, improbable that he would in that case have used all the expressions which St. James has used; but his pastoral Epistles are sufficient to prove that he would have cordially concurred with him in his general

opinion. I believe, then, with many of the Fathers, that St. James wrote this passage with the express intention of correcting false inferences from the true teaching of St. Paul;¹ and that, though there is no contradiction between them, there is a certain antithesis—a traceable difference in the types of dogma which they respectively adopted.²

If the arguments of St. James had been intended for a refutation of St. Paul himself, they would have been singularly ineffectual. They do not fathom the depths of his meaning; they deal with uses of his words which are more superficial and less specifically Christian. A polemical argument must, as such, be a failure if every word which the writer says could be adopted by the person against whom he is writing. It is only as the correction of onesided and erroneous *inferences* from St. Paul's teaching, drawn by honest ignorance or circulated by hostile malice, that the argument of St. James has a value, which the Church of all ages has rejoiced to recognise.

But setting aside the question of *conscious* opposition between the views of the two Apostles, as one which lies outside the range of proof, we have to ask the far more important question, How is their language reconcilable with the truth of God? How can it be said with equal confidence

"Ye are saved *through faith not of works*" (Eph. ii. 8, 9), and

"Ye see . . . that *by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*" (James ii. 24)?

And here I must entirely differ from Luther in the

¹ This is the view adopted by Bp. Bull in his *Harmonia Apostolica*.

² So Schmid, Wiesinger, &c.

view that the two statements, in the senses intended by their authors, are irreconcilable.¹ The reconciliation is easy when we see that St. James is using all three words—Faith, Works, Justification—in a different sense to different persons, with different illustrations, under different circumstances; and when we find, further, that St. James, in other passages, insists no less than St. Paul on the importance of faith; and St. Paul, no less than St. James, on the necessity of works.

i. For by *Faith* St. Paul never means dead faith (*fides informis*) at all. He means, (1) in the lowest sense of the word, general trust in God (*assensus, fiducia*);² then (2) self-surrender to God's will;³ (3) in its highest, and most Pauline sense—the sense in which he uses it when he speaks of “Justification by Faith”—it is self-surrender which has deepened into sanctification; it is a living power of good in every phase of life; it is *unio mystica*, a mystical incorporation with Christ in unity of love and life.⁴ But this application of the word was peculiar to St. Paul, and St. James does not adopt it. He meant by faith in *this* passage a mere theoretical belief—belief which may exist without any germinant life—belief which may stop short at a verbal profession of Jewish orthodoxy—belief

¹ Luther says: “Plures sudarunt in Epistolâ Jacobi ut cum Paulo concordarent . . . sed minus feliciter, *sunt enim contraria*, ‘fides justificat’ ‘fides non justificat’—qui hæc rite conjungere potest, huic vitam meam imponam, et factum me nominare permittam” (*Colloq.* ii. 202). Ströbel, in a review of Wiesinger, says, “No matter in what sense we take the Epistle of St. James, it is always in conflict with the remaining parts of Holy Writ.”

² Rom. iv. 18; as in Heb. xii. 1.

³ Rom. x. 9; Phil. iii. 7.

⁴ Rom. xii. 5; Phil. i. 21; 1 Cor. vi. 17. See *Life and Work of St. Paul*. ii. 180—193; Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*, § 5; Baur, *Paul.* ii. 149; *New Test. Theol.* i. 176.

which does not even go so far as that of demons—belief which, taken alone, is so inappreciable in value that he compares it to a charity which speaks words of idle comfort and does not give.¹

ii. Again, by *Works* the two writers meant very different things. St. Paul was thinking mainly of those works which stood high in the estimation of his Jewish opponents; he meant the works and observances of the Levitical and ceremonial Law—new moons, sabbaths, sacrifices, ablutions, meats, drinks, phylacteries, and so forth:—or, at the very highest, works of ordinary duty, “deeds of the Law,” untouched by emotion, not springing from love to God. He did *not* mean, as St. James did, works of love and goodness done in obedience to the royal law,² those works which spring from a true and lively faith, which *must* spring from it, which it is as impossible to sever from it as it is to sever from fire its light and heat.³

iii. And, finally, the sense of the word *Justification* in St. Paul moves in a higher plane than that in which it is used by St. James. St. Paul uses the word in a special, a technical, a theological sense, to express the righteousness of God, which, by a judgment of acquittal, pronounced once for all in the expiatory death of Christ, He imputes to guilty man. St. James uses the word in the much simpler sense of our being declared and shown to be righteous—not indeed, as many have said, before

¹ In other passages “faith” connotes somewhat more than this, namely, trust in God (i. 5; v. 15).

² Ja. i. 25; ii. 12.

³ If St. Paul attaches to “works” a lower meaning than St. James, St. James attaches to “faith” a lower meaning than St. Paul; but there can be no confusion about the results, because each writer uses the words in senses which he makes perfectly clear.

men only¹—but righteous before God, as those whose life is in accordance with their belief.² St. Paul speaks of the justification which begins for the sinner by the trustful acceptance of his reconciliation to God in Christ, and which attains its perfect stage when the believer is indeed “in Christ”—when Christ has become to him a new nature and a quickening spirit. St. James speaks of the justification of the believer by his producing such works as are the sole possible demonstration of the vitality of his indwelling faith.³

Briefly, then, it may be said that the works which St. Paul thinks of are the works of the Law, those of St. James the works of godliness; that St. Paul speaks of deep and mystic faith, St. James of theoretic belief: that St. Paul has in view the initial justification of a sinner, St. James the complete justification of a believer.⁴

iv. In accordance with this view, although both

¹ This common explanation (Calvin, Grotius, Baumgarten, &c.) is quite untenable. There is not a word in St. James to indicate that he is only thinking of justification before men; and the notion that he is, is refuted by ver. 14.

² As our Lord also said, “By thy words thou shalt be justified” (Matt. xii. 37); and St. Paul himself, in Rom. ii. 13, “the *doers* of the law shall be *justified*.” Had this sentence occurred in St. James, how eagerly would it have been seized upon as a flat contradiction of Rom. iii. 20, “Therefore, from the works of the law shall *no* flesh be justified before Him.” But if the same author can thus in the same Epistle use the same word in different senses, what difficulty can there be in supposing that this may be done by *different* writers, without any hostile intention?

³ “To justify” (δικαιοῦν πρὸς) has in the Bible two meanings: (1) “To pronounce the innocent righteous in accordance with his innocence” (Ex. xxiii. 7; Prov. xvii. 15; Is. v. 23; Matt. xii. 37, &c.); (2) to make righteous, or lead to righteousness (Dan. xii. 31; Is. liii. 11; and Rom. *passim*). In St. James true faith is imputed as righteousness, but justification follows works as the proof of true faith (Lange).

⁴ “Works,” says Luther, “do not make us righteous, but cause us to be declared righteous” (Lutke xvii. 9, 10).

Apostles refer, for illustration of their views, to the life of the Patriarch who lived so many centuries before the delivery of the Law, they do *not* refer to the same events in his life. St. Paul illustrates his position by Abraham's belief in God's promise that he should have a son, when against hope he believed in hope.¹ St. James, taking the life and the faith of Abraham, so to speak, "much lower down the stream," shows how Abraham, many years afterwards, was justified as a believer, justified by works, when he gave the crowning proof of his obedience by the willingness to slay even his only son and the heir of the promise.² It is obviously as true to say that Abraham in that act was (in the ordinary meaning of the words) justified by faith, as that he was justified by works. He was justified by faith, because nothing but his faith could have led him to such perfect endurance in the hour of trial; he was justified by works, because, without his works, there could have been no proof that his faith existed. Faith and works, in this sense, are, in fact, inseparably intertwined. There cannot be such works without faith; there cannot be such faith without works. It is really the same

¹ Rom. iv. 3, 9, 22; Gen. xv. 6.

² James ii. 23; Gen. xxii. 12. See Huther *ad loc.* A remarkable Talmudic story tells us that Satan slandered Abraham before God, saying that God had given him a son when he was a hundred years old, and he had not even spared a dove for sacrifice. God answers that Abraham would not spare even his son if required. So God said, "Take now thy son" (as if a king should say to his bravest warrior, *Fight now this hardest battle of all*), "for fear it should be said that thy former trials were easy." "I have two sons," answered Abraham. "Take thine only son." "Each," he answered, "is the only son of his mother." "Take him whom thou lovest." "I love them both." Then God said, "Take Isaac." Abraham obeyed, and on the way Satan met him, and tried to make him murmur. Abraham answered, "I will walk in mine integrity" (Sanhedrin, f. 89, b).

thing to say that a man is (in one or other of the senses of the word) justified by such a faith as must from its very nature issue in good works, or by such works as can only issue from a true and lively faith. Nor is it surprising (as we have seen) that the question should be illustrated by the example of Abraham, whose life and faith were constantly discussed in their minutest particulars by the Jewish Rabbis, and who was asserted to have not only been saved by faith, but to have observed even the oral commandments centuries before they were delivered.¹ If St. James also takes the instance of Rahab, this does not involve a necessary reference to the remark in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that she, too, was saved by faith. For the example of Rahab was also greatly discussed in the Jewish schools, and for her faith and works it was said that no less than eight prophets, who were also priests, had sprung from her, and that Huldah, the prophetess, was one of her descendants.²

v. And the superficial contradiction between the Apostles vanishes to nothing when we bear in mind that St. Paul is dealing with the vain confidence of legalism, St. James with the vain confidence of orthodoxy. St. Paul was writing to Gentile Churches to prevent them from being seduced into trusting for salvation to the adoption of external badges and ceremonials, or to good deeds done in a spirit of servile fear. St. James is arguing either with Jewish bigots who thought that a profession of Monotheism and a participation in Jewish privileges³ would save them; or with mistaken Paulinists who had

¹ Yoma, f. 28. b; Kiddushin, f. 82, a.

² Meggillah, l. 11. b.

³ Matt. iii. 9.

snatched up a formula which they did not understand, and who thought that justification could be severed from sanctification—that a saving faith was possible without the holiness of an accordant life. St. Paul is contrasting faith in Christ with works of the Law; St. James is contrasting a dead unreal faith with a faith which evidences its reality by holy works. St. Paul's arguments were meant to overthrow the vain confidence of the Pharisee¹; St. James's tell equally against the Jew who pillowed his hopes on fruitless orthodoxy, and the Antinomian who identified saving faith with barren profession.

For, lastly, there is no difficulty in showing that both as regards faith and works the Apostles, however much their expressions may differ, were substantially at one.

(i.) Thus as regards FAITH, St. James says in this very chapter:—

“And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness”² (ii. 23).

And St. Paul quotes the same verse in the same words (Rom. iv. 3), with the introduction “What saith the Scripture?”

So little does St. James exclude faith, that he speaks of “the testing of faith” as working out that “endurance” which is the appointed path of perfectionment (i. 3); he urges the duty of prayer offered in

¹ Comp. Acts xiii. 39.

² “Magnum opus sed ex Fide” (Aug. on Ps. xxxi.). Ewald briefly says, “Faith is the first and most necessary thing: this is here also taken for granted throughout; but it must prove its existence by corresponding works, otherwise man cannot obtain Divine justification and final redemption” (*Die Sendschreiben*, ii. 199).

unwavering faith as the means of obtaining Divine wisdom (i. 6) ; he describes Christianity as being the “holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of the Glory” (ii. 1) ; he speaks of the poor as being heirs of the Kingdom because they are rich in faith (ii. 5) ; he implies the absolute necessity of faith co-existing with work ;—working with them, receiving its perfection from them (ii. 22, 26), and does not imagine the possibility of such works as he contemplates except as the visible proofs of an invisible faith.

(ii.) And exactly as St. James neither ignores nor underestimates faith, so neither does St. Paul ignore nor underestimate the value and necessity of good Works. He speaks of God as “being able to make all joy abound in us, that having in all things always all sufficiency (*αὐτάρκειαν*) we may abound unto every good work” (2 Cor. ix. 8). He speaks of good works as the appointed path in which we are predestined to walk (Eph. ii. 10). He describes the walking “in every good work, bearing fruit,” as being the worthy walk, and the walk which pleases God (Col. i. 10). He prays that the Lord Jesus may stablish the hearts of His converts in every good word and work (2 Thess. ii. 17). He devotes a practical section in every Epistle to the inculcation of Christian duties and virtues (Rom. xii.—xvi. ; 1 Cor. xvi. ; 2 Cor. ix. ; Gal. v. 6 ; Eph. v., vi. ; Phil. iv. ; Col. iii., iv., &c.). He devotes the almost exclusive exhortations of his very latest Epistles to impress on all classes of his converts the blessedness of faithful working (1 Tim. ii. 10, v. 10, vi. 18 ; 2 Tim. iii. 17 ; Tit. ii. 7—14, iii. 8). Nay, more, in the very Epistle of which the central idea is Justification by Faith, he does not scruple to use the word justification

in the less specific sense of St. James, and to write that "*the doers of the Law shall be justified*"¹—a sentence which St. James might have adopted as his text. Both Apostles would have freely conceded that (in a certain sense) faith without works is mere orthodoxy, and works without faith mere legal righteousness.

Surely after these proofs that for all practical purposes the Apostle of the Gentiles and the Bishop of the Circumcised are fundamentally at one—that they agree in thought, though they differ in expression, or at least that their minor differences are merged in a higher unity—it is unjustifiable to speak as though, on this subject at any rate, there was any bitter controversy between them. They approached the truths of Christianity from different sides; they looked at them under different aspects; they lived amid different surroundings; they were arguing against different errors; they used different phraseology. The anti-thesis between them only lies in regions of literary expression; it in no way affects the duty or the theory of the Christian life. There is not a word which St. Paul wrote on these topics which would not have been accepted after a little explanation by St. James, though he might have preferred to alter some of the expressions which St. Paul employed. There is not a word which St. James wrote on them which—when explained in St. James's sense—St. Paul would not have endorsed. It is true, as St. Paul wrote, that we are "justified by faith"; it is true, as St. James wrote, that "we cannot be justified without works." Amid the seeming verbal contradictions there is a real agreement. Both Apostles

¹ Rom. ii. 13.

held identical views respecting the will of God, the regeneration of man, and the destiny of the redeemed.¹ The ideal which each accepted was so nearly the same, that St. James's brief sketch of the Wisdom from above might be hung as a beautiful companion picture to St. Paul's glorious description of Heavenly charity. Both would have agreed, heart and soul, in the simple and awful moral truth of such passages as these :—

“So speak and so do as they who shall be judged by the law of liberty.” (Ja. ii. 12.)

“Faith apart from works is dead, by itself.” (Ja. ii. 17, 26.)

“The work of each shall become manifest, for the day shall reveal it.” (1 Cor. iii. 13.)

“God shall give to each according to his works.” (Rom. ii. 6—10.)

“We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ that each may obtain the things done by the instrumentality of the body, with reference to the things he did, whether good, or evil.” (2 Cor. v. 10.)

Both, again, would have accepted heart and soul such language as that of St. John, in which these superficial discrepancies are finally reconciled—“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John i. 6); —or as that of St. Paul himself in the very Epistle in which he first worked out the sketch of his great scheme, and in the three different conclusions to his own favourite and thrice-repeated formula :—

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision,”—

¹ See *supra*, pp. 40, 48, the note on Jas. i. 18.

But, "Faith working effectually by means of love."
(Gal. v. 6.)

But, "A new creature." (Gal. vi. 15.)

But, "An observance of the commandments of God."
(1 Cor. vii. 19.)

Had St. Paul written, as Luther wrote for him, that man is justified "by Faith *only*"—had he been in this sense a Solifidian—then there would have been a more apparent contradiction between him and St. James. But what St. Paul said was, "Therefore we reckon that a man is justified *by faith*, apart from the works of the Law" (Rom. iii. 28), and it was Luther who ventured to interpolate the word "alone"—the "word *alone*," as Erasmus calls it—"stoned with so many shoutings"—("Vox sola tot clamoribus lapidata"). In St. James's sense of faith this would have indeed been open to the contradiction (ii. 24) "Not by faith alone" (οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον). But even had St. Paul used the word "alone" he would have said what is true in *his* sense of the words, and in the sense in which they are adopted in the Articles of our Church. His words only become untrue when they are transferred into the different senses in which they are used by his brother Apostle.¹

In this, as in so many other cases, we may thank God that the truth has been revealed to us under many lights; and that, by a diversity of gifts, the Spirit ministered to each Apostle severally as He would, inspiring the one to deepen our spiritual life by the solemn truth that Works cannot justify apart from Faith; and the other to stimulate our efforts after a holy life by the no less solemn truth that Faith cannot

¹ See Article IX., and on it Bishop Forbes, Bishop Harold Browne, &c.

justify us unless it be the living faith which is shown by Works. There is, in the diversity, a deeper unity. The Church, thank God, is "*Circumamicta varietatibus*"—clothed in raiment of many hues. St. Paul had dwelt prominently on Faith; St. Peter dwells much on Hope; St. John insists most of all on Love. But the Christian life is the synthesis of these Divine graces, and the Works of which St. James so vehemently impresses the necessity, are works which are the combined result of operative faith, of constraining love, and of purifying hope.¹

¹ See an excellent tract on St. Paul and St. James by Dean Bagot.

Book V.

THE EARLIER LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. JOHN.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

ST. JOHN.

“ For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear—believe the aged friend—
Is just our chance of the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.”—

BROWNING, *A Death in the Desert*.

“ AND recognising the grace given to me, James, and Kephass, and *John*, who are thought to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we to the Gentiles, but they to the circumcision ”¹—

So wrote St. Paul to the Galatians, in one of the passages of the New Testament, which—apart from the Gospels—has a deeper personal interest, and which throws more light on the condition of the Church in the days of the Apostles than any other.² It is an inestimable privilege to the Church that we possess writings of each of these three Pillar-Apostles—as well as of that untimely-born Apostle on whose daring originality they were inclined to look with alarm, until he had fully set forth to them that view of the Gospel which was emphatically “*his* Gospel,”³ and which he had learnt “neither from men nor by the instrumen-

¹ Gal. ii. 9.

² Gal. i. 11—ii. 21.

³ “My Gospel,” 1 Cor. xi. 23. τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω (Gal. ii. 2).

talities of man."¹ We are thus enabled to see the Gospel in the fourfold aspect in which it appeared to four men,—each specially enlightened by the Spirit of God, but each limited by individual conditions, because each received the treasure in earthen vessels. The minds of men inevitably differ. The individuality of each man—his subjectivity—his capacity to receive truth—his power of expressing it—all differ. Hence the truths which he utters, since they are uttered in human language, must be more or less differentiated by human peculiarities, and hence arises a gracious and fruitful variety, not a perplexing contradiction. Had the Apostles been bad men, had there been in their hearts the least tinge of spiritual or moral falsity, the pure stream of truth would have been corrupted by evil admixtures; but since they were sincere and noble men, the individuality with which the style and method of each is stamped so far from being a loss to us is a peculiar gain. No one man, unless his powers had been dilated almost to infinitude, would have been able to set forth to myriads of different souls the perfection of many-sided truths. It was a blessed ordinance of God which enables us to hear the words of revelation spoken by so many noble voices in so many differing tones.

We see from St. Paul's allusion, that twenty years after the Resurrection² the three Pillar-Apostles, at the date of his conference with them, were at Jerusalem, and were still regarded as the chief representatives of Jewish Christianity. But their Judaic sympathies were felt in very different degrees. St. James repre-

¹ Gal. i. 1, οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθ, ἡπῶν οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου, 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3.

² About A.D. 52.

sents Christianity on its most Judaic side—spiritualising its morals, but assuming rather than expounding its most specific truths. He wrote exactly as we should have expected a man to write who was a Nazarite, a late convert, a Bishop of the Church of Jerusalem, a daily frequenter of the Temple, a man in the highest repute among the Jews themselves, a man who, for more than a quarter of a century, lived in the focus of the most powerful Judaic influences. He was the acknowledged leader of those converts who were least willing to break loose from the Levitic law and the tradition of the fathers. St. Peter, on the other hand, became less and less a representative of the narrower phase of Judaic Christianity—more and more, as life advanced, the Apostle of Catholicity. The vein of timidity which, in his natural temperament, was so strangely mixed with courage—the plasticity which gave to his conduct a Judaic colouring so long as he was surrounded by the elders at Jerusalem, or by emissaries who came from James to Antioch—caused him to be long regarded by the converted Jews (undoubtedly against his will) as a party leader. Yet he was among the earliest to see the universality of the Gospel message, and he flung himself with ardour into the support of St. Paul's effort to emancipate the Gentiles from Levitic observances. And when he began his missionary journeys, his thoughts widened more and more until, as we find from his Epistle, he was enabled to accept unreservedly the teachings of St. Paul, while he divests them of their antithetical character, and avoids their more controversial formulæ. When we combine the teaching of St. James and St. Paul, we find those contrasted yet complementary truths which

were necessary to the full apprehension of the Catholic Faith in its manifold applicability to human needs. St. Peter occupies an intermediate and conciliatory position between these two extremes—more progressive than St. James, less daringly original and independent than St. Paul. But to utter the final word of Christian revelation—to drop, as it were, the great keystone, which was still needed to complete and compact the wide arch of Truth—was reserved as the special glory of the Beloved Disciple. And this was the crowning work of that old age which, as a peculiar blessing to the Church of Christ, was probably prolonged to witness the dawn of the second century of the Christian Church.¹

But in St. John too we see that growth of spiritual enlightenment which made his life an unbroken education. In his latest writings we find a deeper insight into the truth than it would have been possible for him to attain before God had “shown him all things in the slow history of their ripening.” The “Son of Thunder” of the Synoptic Gospels had the lessons of many years to learn before he could become the St. John who in Patmos saw the Apocalypse. The St. John who saw the Apocalypse had *still* the lessons of many years to learn, and the fall of Jerusalem to witness, before he could gaze on the world from the snowy summit of ninety winters, and become the Evangelist of the fourth Gospel, the Apostle of Christian Love.

And yet the days of St. John were not divided from each other by any overpowering crisis, but were, from first to last,

“Bound each to each by natural piety.”

¹ Qui in secreta cœvinæ se nativitatis immergens ausus est dicere quod cuncta sæcula nesciebant, “In principio erat verbum” (Jer. in Isa. lvi. 41.

In the life of St. Paul the vision on the road to Damascus had cleft a deep chasm between his earlier and later years. The *character* of the Apostle retained the same elements, but his *opinions* were suddenly revolutionised. Paul the Apostle could only look back with an agony of remorse on the thoughts and deeds of Saul the Inquisitor. Like Augustine and Luther, he is a type of the ardent natures which are brought to God and to the service of the truth by a spasm of sudden change. But St. John was one of those pure saints of whom the grace of God takes early hold, and in whose life, as in those of Thomas à Kempis and Melancthon, "reason and religion run together like warp and woof to weave the web of a holy life." To him, from earliest days, the words of the poet are beautifully applicable—

"There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them ; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad hearts ! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not ;
Oh, if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arm, dread Power ! around
them cast."

Never, perhaps, was a more glorious destiny reserved for any man, or a destiny more unlike what he could have conceived possible, than that which was awaiting the Apostle, when he played as a boy beside his father's boat on the bright strip of sand which still marks the site of Bethsaida. His father was Zabdia or Zebedee, of whom we know nothing more than that he was a fisherman sufficiently well-to-do to have hired servants of his own.¹ He was thus in more prosperous circum-

¹ Mark i. 20.

stances than his partner Jonas, the father of Peter and Andrew. His wife was Salome, sister of the Virgin Mary. The fact that she was one of those who ministered to the Lord of her substance, and also bought large stores of spices for His grave, are additional signs that Zabdia and his wife were not poor. Their sons were James and John, who were thus first cousins of our Lord according to the flesh.¹

We catch no glimpse of John till we see him among the disciples of the Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. We are told however that, in his manhood, he appeared to the learned Sanhedrists of Jerusalem to be a "simple and unlettered" man.² Doubtless the term which they actually used was the contemptuous *am-haarets*, a technical expression far more scornful than its literal translation, "people of the land."³ It is clear, therefore, that he had never been what they called "a pupil of the wise," and had not been trained in that cumbrous system of the Oral Law which they regarded as the

¹ Nicephorus and others rightly call Zebedee *ἰδιωναύκληρον*, "an independent fisherman with a ship of his own." What St. Chrysostom (*Hom. i. in Joann.*) says of the extreme poverty and humility of his lot (*οὐδὲν πενέστερον οὐδὲ ἀτελέστερον, κ.τ.λ.*) is rhetorical exaggeration (see Lampe, *Prolegomena*, p. 5). The Lake of Galilee was extraordinarily rich in fish, some of which were regarded as great delicacies, and—like the *coracinus*—were extremely rare. The trade in fish at Tiberias, Sepphoris, Taricheæ, and especially at Jerusalem, was so active that a leading fisherman like Zabdia must have been almost rich.

² Acts iv. 13. A man was called a mere ignoramus (*am-haarets*) when he knew the Scripture and the Mishna, but had never been one of the "pupils of the wise" (*Thalmîdî hachakamîm*). If he knew only the Scriptures, he was called "an empty cistern" (*bôr*) (Wagenseil, *Sota*, p. 517). The *idiotes* is one who is no authority on a subject (see Orig. *c. Cels.* i. 30). Augustine calls the Apostles "ineruditos . . . non peritos grammaticæ, non arinatos dialecticæ, non rhetorica inflatos" (*De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 5).

³ For the meaning and associations of this word see Dr. McCaul, *Old Paths*, pp. 458—464.

only learning. It was well for him that he had not. The Rabbinism of that day was nothing better than a system of scholastic pedantry, impotent for every spiritual end, like many another vaunted system of purely verbal orthodoxy, yet tending to inflate the minds of its votaries with the conceit of knowledge without the reality. Of such learning it might well be said, in the words of Heraclitus, that "it teaches nothing."¹

On the other hand, we see from St. John's own writings that he was a man of consummate natural gifts, and that he had been so far well educated as to be acquainted with both Greek and Hebrew,² of which the latter was not an ordinary acquirement even of well-educated Jews. Apart from his unequalled capacity for the reception of spiritual grace, his natural gifts appear in his deep insight into the human heart; in the dramatic power with which, by a few touches, he sets before us the most vivid conception of the most varied characters; in his style, apparently so simple yet really so profound—a style supremely beautiful, yet unlike that of any other writer, whether sacred or profane; and, above all, in the fact that he was a fit and chosen vessel for that consummate truth—the Incarnation of the Word of God. That truth, while with one swift stroke it summarised the speculations of Alexandrian theosophy, became in its turn the starting-point for the most sacred utterances of all Christian thinkers till the end of time.

His native Galilee was inhabited by the bravest and

¹ πολυμαθίη οὐ διδάσκει (Heracl.).

² The quotations of St. John in the Gospel are not always taken direct from the LXX., but are sometimes altered into more direct accordance with the Hebrew (xix. 37; vi. 45; xiii. 18).

truest race in Palestine.¹ They were remarkable for faithfulness to their theocratic nationality. They detested and were ashamed of alike the Roman dominion and the Herodian satrapy which was its outward sign. Their temperaments were full of an enthusiasm which easily caught fire. The revolt of Judas of Galilee against the registrations of Quirinus showed the indignation with which Galileans contemplated the reduction of the Holy Land to the degraded position of a Roman province. The watchword of that uprising was that the Chosen People should have "no Lord or master but God." Wild and hopeless as the insurrection was, and terribly as it was avenged, its failure was so far from quenching the spirit of patriotism by which it had been instigated, that it was not difficult for the sons of Judas long years afterwards² to fan the hot embers into flame.³ The revolt of Judas took place when St. John was about twelve years old—the age at which a Jewish boy began to enter on the responsibilities of manhood. It was impossible that an event which produced so widespread an agitation should have failed to leave an impression on his memory. His sympathies must have been with the aims, if not with the acts, of the daring patriot. In both the sons of Zebedee we trace a certain fiery vehemence, and this it was which earned for them from the Lord the title of "Boanerges."⁴ It is probable

¹ Jos. *Antt.* xviii. 1, § 1, 6; *B. J.* ii. 8, § 1.

² A.D. 8 of our era.

³ In A.D. 47 and A.D. 66.

⁴ Boanerges, "*Beni-rejesh*" (Mark iii. 17). No doubt the title was earned by the fire and impetuosity of their nature; not because they were, as Theophylact says, "mighty heralds and divines" (Theophyl. in *Matth.* i.; Epiphani. *Haer.* 73; Cyrill. Alex. *ad Nestor.* 1). For a multi-
 ple of the guesses about a matter perfectly simple, see Lampe, *Prolegom.*
 24—30.

that they shared in some of the views which had once actuated their brother Apostle, the Zealot Simon.¹

If the home of Zebedee was in or near Bethsaida, his two sons must have grown up in constant intercourse with Philip and Andrew and Peter, and with his cousins, the sons of Alphæus, and with Nathanael of the not-far-distant Cana. Whether he ever visited the home of the Virgin at Nazareth, and saw the sinless youth of Jesus, and the sternly legal faithfulness of "His brethren," we do not know, but in any case we can see that he enjoyed that best of training which consists in being brought up in the midst of sweet and noble natures, and in the free fresh life of a hardy calling and a beautiful land. And what most of all ennobled the aspirations of these young Galileans was that, with perfect trust in God, they were waiting for the consolation of Israel—they were cherishing the thought which lay at the very heart of all that was best and deepest in the old Covenant—the hope that the promised Messiah at length would come.

We are not told a single particular about his early years. We first see him—evidently in the prime of early manhood—as a disciple of the Baptist.² He does not mention himself by name, because in his Gospel he shows a characteristic reserve. But there never has been a doubt that he is the disciple who was with St. Andrew when they heard from their Master the words which were to influence their whole future life. The Baptist had received the deputation which the San-

¹ Luke vi. 15, Kananite = Zealot. The Zealots formed the "extreme left" division of the Pharisees politically, as the Essenes did religiously.

² Ecclesiastical tradition says that he was called "*adolescentior*," and even "*puer*." Paulin. Nol. *Ep.* 51. Ambros. *Offic.* ii. 20, § 101. Aug. c. *Faust.* xxx. 4. Jer. c. *Jerin*, i. 26.

hedrin had sent to enquire into his claims, and had told them that he was not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor "the Prophet." On the next day he saw Jesus coming towards him on His return from the temptation in the wilderness. Then first he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" and testified that he had seen the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. Again, the next day, fixing his eyes on Jesus as He walked by, he exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God!" At once the two disciples followed Jesus. Turning and gazing on them as they followed, He said, "What are ye seeking?" Giving Him the highest title of reverence they knew, the simple Galileans answered, "Rabbi, where stayest thou?" He saith to them, "Come and see." They came and saw. It was now four in the evening, and they stayed with Him that night.

That brief intercourse sufficed to convince them that Jesus was the Christ. The next morning Andrew sought his brother Simon, and with the simple startling announcement, "We have found the Messiah," led him to the Lord.

It is not mentioned that St. John sought his brother, and it is clear that the elder son of Zebedee was not called to full discipleship till afterwards on the Sea of Galilee. It was from no difference in character that James did not, so far as we know, become a hearer of the Baptist. He was earning his daily bread as a fisherman, and may have found no opportunity to leave the Plain of Gennesareth. I have ventured elsewhere to conjecture the reason why St. John was able to seek the ministry of the Baptist though his brother was

not.¹ He had some connexion with Jerusalem, and even had a home there.² We find an explanation of this in the fact that the fish of the Lake of Galilee were largely supplied to Jerusalem, and nothing is more probable than that Zebedee, as a master fisherman, should have sent his younger son, at least occasionally, to the Holy City to superintend what must have been one of the most lucrative branches of his trade. If so, it would have been easy for St. John to reach in less than a day the banks of Jordan, and to listen to the mighty voice which was then rousing Priests and Pharisees as well as people from their sensual sleep.

The teaching of the Baptist appealed to the sternest instincts of his youthful follower. Its lofty morality, its uncompromising denunciations, its dauntless independence must have exercised a strong fascination over the young Galilean. It made him more than ever a Son of Thunder. It has been said of John the Baptist that he was like a burning torch—that the whole man was an Apocalypse. In the Apocalypse of him who was for a time his disciple, we still seem to hear echoes of that ringing voice, to catch hues of earthquake and eclipse from that tremendous imagery.

The question here arises whether St. John was or was not unmarried. The ancient Fathers are fond of speaking of him as a "virgin." As early as the pseudo-Ignatius we find an address to "Virgins," *i.e.*, celibates, with the prayer, "May I enjoy your holiness as that of Elijah, Joshua the son of Nun, Melchizedek, Elisha,

¹ See *Life of Christ*, i. 144.

² John xix. 27. "From that hour the Disciple took her to his own home" (ἐκ τὰ ὕδια).

Jeremiah, John the Baptist, the Beloved Disciple, Timothy, Evodius, and Clemens." Nothing corresponding to this praise of "virginity" is found either in the Scripture or in the earliest Fathers, for "the virgins" of Rev. xiv. 14, and "those who have made themselves eunuchs for Christ's sake" of Matt. xix. 12, are expressions which, when taken in the sense which was familiar to the Jews themselves, convey no such exaltation of the unwedded life.¹ Tertullian, however, in his book "On Single Marriage," calls St. John "*Christi spado*," and St. Jerome, filled with his monastic *gnosis* on this subject, says that "when St. John wished to marry his Lord restrained him."² Similar testimony is repeated by St. Augustine, Epiphanius, and others, but it only seems to have been derived from the "Acts" of Leucius. Apart from direct evidence, all the customs of the Jews make it extremely improbable, and St. Paul tells us that "*the rest of the Apostles*" as well as Kephas were married.³ The notion of his celibacy was strengthened by the erroneous misreading of a superscription to his first epistle which is itself erroneous. Augustine in one place quotes 1 John iii. 2, as occurring in St. John's letter "*to the Parthians*,"⁴ and he is followed by Idacius Clarus, and (according to

¹ See the passages of Zohar quoted by Schöttgen, p. 159.

² Tert. *De Monogamia*, 17; Epiphanius. *Haer.* lviii.; Jer. c. *Jovinian.* 1, 14, and in *proleg. Joann.*, Praef. in *Matt.*, ad Is. lvi. 4. Aug. c. *Evast.* xxx. 4. The virginity of St. John became a commonplace with the Ecclesiastical writers. See Chrysostom, *De Virg.* 82 (*Opp.* i. 332), Ps. Chrysostom (*Opp.* viii. 2, 246, ed. Montfaucon) where Peter is a type of *σεμνογαμία*, and John of *παρθενία*. Ambrose, *De Inst. Virg.* viii. 50. The belief originated in the *Acts* of Leucius. See Zahn, *Acta Joannis* c. ciii.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 2, on which Ambrosiaster remarks "omnes Apostoli, excepto Johanne et Paulo uxores habuerunt."

⁴ *Est. Praef.* in 1 John.

Bede) by Athanasius. But as there are also traces of its having been called "*a letter to Virgins*," it has been supposed that *Parthos* is a mistaken contraction for *parthenous*, or *vice versâ*. But even if St. John had thus written a letter to "virgins," it would not be a necessary inference that he was himself unmarried, or even that "virgins" and celibates were equivalent terms.¹

The first call of St. John on the banks of Jordan was not the final call. St. John accompanied Jesus to the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee, and saw Him manifest forth His glory. Then, during the early ministry of Jesus in Southern Judæa, the little band of brethren seem to have resumed for a time their ordinary avocations.

It was on the Lake of Galilee, after the miraculous draught of fishes, that there came to him the decisive call—"Follow Me." He obeyed the call. With his brother he left his father Zebedee and the boat, and the hired servants—left all, and followed Jesus. Of Zebedee we hear no more. It is probable that he died soon afterwards; for in the bright year of the Galilean ministry, before Jesus was driven to fly northward, and to wander through semi-heathen districts, we find Salome, the mother of James and John, among "the women who ministered unto Him of their substance."

The Apostles whom the Lord gathered finally around Him before the Sermon on the Mount fall into three groups of four, of which the first and most privileged consisted of Andrew, Peter, James, and

¹ Another cause of this belief was the fancy that our Lord specially approved of St. John's celibacy, and that this also was the reason why the Virgin was entrusted to his care. Zahn, *Acta Joannis*, p. 201, *seq.*

John; of these again the last three were the most chosen of the chosen.¹ Alone of the Apostles they were permitted to witness the Raising of Jairus's daughter, the Transfiguration, and the Agony in the Garden. And of these three again the nearest and dearest was John. Of both Peter and John it might have been said that they, more than all the rest, were disciples whom Jesus loved as personal companions²; but St. John alone—not with a claim of vainglory, but with the simple testimony of truth—has indicated to us unmistakably, yet with dignified reserve, that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved and honoured with the affection of high esteem.³ St. Peter was the more prominent as the champion of the Christ; St. John was the closer friend of Jesus.⁴ And we see in his Gospel the *proof* that he was so. The Synoptists witness faithfully to external events. St. John gives a far more inward picture. He writes as one to whom it had been granted to know something of his Master's inmost thoughts.⁵

And yet this high honour, this distinguishing personal affection, arose from no faultless ideality in his character. The youth with whom Italian art has made us familiar—the youth of unearthly beauty, with features

¹ Ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτοτέρους (Clem. Alex.).

² In John ix. 2 we have the expression ἔρχεται πρὸς Σίμωνα Πέτρον καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἄλλοι μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς. From the change of term (ἐφίλει, not as in other places ἡγάπα), and from the structure of the sentence, Canon Westcott (*ad loc.*) infers, with much probability, that Peter is here included in the description.

³ ἡγάπα, viii. 23; ix. 26; xxi. 7, 20.

⁴ St. Peter has been called φιλόχριστος, St. John φιλοῖήσους.

⁵ See John vi. 6, 61, 64: ἦδαι γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς κ.τ.λ. ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν, xii. 33; xiii. 1, 3, 11, 21. ἐτερεύθη τῷ πνεύματι, xviii. 4; xix. 28, &c.

of almost feminine softness, with the long bright locks streaming down his neck, and the eagle by his side, is not the St. John of the New Testament: he is neither the St. John of the Synoptists and the Apocalypse, nor of the Fourth Gospel and Epistles—but is the one-sided idealisation of Christian painters.¹ Jesus loved him because of his warm affections, his devoted faithfulness, his glowing zeal, his passionate enthusiasm; not because his character as yet approached perfection. The young St. John had very much both to learn and to unlearn. He participated in the faults of fretfulness, impatience, emulous selfishness, ambitious literalism, want of consideration, want of tenderness, dulness of understanding, and hardness of heart, which, as the Gospels so faithfully tell us, were common to all the disciples.² Nay more, it is remarkable that, in nearly every instance in which he is brought into prominence, either singly or with his brother, it is in connexion with some error of perception or fault of conduct. He had to *unlearn* the exaggeration of the very tendencies which gave to his character so much of its human charm. He had to learn lessons of tolerance, lessons of mercy, lessons of humility, which perhaps it took him his whole life to understand in all their fulness as falling under the one law of Christian love.

1. Thus on one occasion a selfish dispute had arisen among the Apostles as to which of them should be the greatest.³ Our Lord rebuked it by taking a little child

¹ Pictures of St. John existed in early days among the Carpocratians. See the fragments of Leucius in Zahn, p. 223.

² Matt. xv. 16; xvi. 6—12; John xii. 16; Mark ix. 33; Luke ix. 49; xxii. 24; xxiv. 25, &c.

³ Luke ix. 49; Mark ix. 38.